

# THE SCORE

A MUSIC MAGAZINE

Editor: William Glock

Number 28, January 1961

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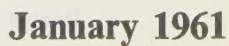
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## A MUSIC MAGAZINE



**Editor: WILLIAM GLOCK**

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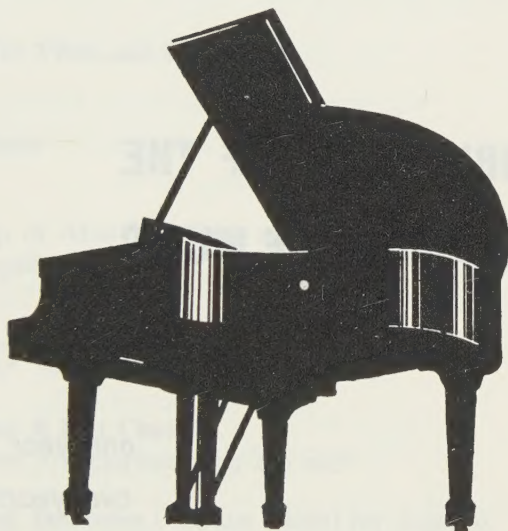


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## A MUSIC MAGAZINE

Editor : William Glock

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**Number 28, January 1961**



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## WAGNER: THOUGHTS IN SEASON

*Joseph Kerman*

When Wagner died in 1883 he left, as everyone does, a rich heritage of memories to his friends and to his enemies. His great legacy to the European consciousness was an ideology, and to the world of music a polarization, an alignment on either side of a split forced by confrontation with his scores. More tangibly, he left operas, music-dramas, and a set of *Gesammelte Schriften* running to ten gold-embossed volumes in the second edition, revised and enlarged by the author. Wagner also left, inevitably, debts, which (again inevitably) were to be taken care of by somebody else. The question I wish to raise is, to what extent are we still paying off these debts? For of course, over the years we have had to pay, and we have had to account for everything: *Das Judenthum in der Musik* as well as *Tristan und Isolde*, the split as well as the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the dross of Wagnerism as well as whatever metal may be in Wagner's art.

By 1959 the friends and enemies have been depersonalized into history; an obvious point, perhaps, but one that is worth making. For so long as they lived, they took a bitter interest in every transaction concerning the great man. Wagner was, to put it briefly, something of a monster in private life; and as that private life was well broadcast, the Victorians could not consider any aspect of the Wagner-complex without considering the moral man. This is not the place to debate how, if at all, such consideration should weigh with a modern historian or critic. I note simply that as vivid personal memories fade, Wagner's conduct can take its place in our usual uncomfortable historical perspective, along with that of Tasso, Caravaggio, Rousseau, Lawrence, and other unpleasant great men.

The ideology of Wagnerism is now also essentially a matter of history, but it is a history that must detain us. The very term gives pause; word-forms of this order are rather rare and suspect, especially so within the arts. There are no such

isms as Bachism or Mozartism or Schoenbergism, but there are Wagnerism, Orphism, Petrarchism, Darwinism, Marxism: all denoting frames of mind that go far beyond personal influence or personal propaganda, far beyond the strictly artistic, scientific, or social-scientific into the ideological realm. As soon as ideology begins, by its very nature, to transcend the local realities of the originating figure, it attracts the suspicion of professionals—musicians, scientists, or social scientists who see the fatal distorting appeal it makes both to the dilettante and to the masses. So as Wagnerism moved beyond music it met with a good deal of hostility from the trade. And paradoxically, though Wagnerism had begun as an idea about art, one did not need to be a musician to be a Wagnerian; the ideology could flourish divested of any essential artistic import.

Now if an ideology were to grow up around a man posthumously or during his lifetime without his having done anything to encourage it, it might possibly be passed over as irrelevant to his actual contribution. But of course this was not so with Wagnerism. The apologists are wrong to claim that the ideology was manufactured only after Wagner's death, in the unscrupulous Bayreuth press-mill run by Cosima Wagner, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Glaserapp, Wolzogen, and the rest. Wagner invented Wagnerism, fostered it with the greatest care, and was for some years the first and only Wagnerian. What is more—and this touches at once the fundamental artistic problem—Wagner has always been suspected of caring more about ideology than about art, of writing his music-dramas less as works of art than as evidence for Wagnerism. If there is any truth at all in this, it follows (paradoxically again) that we have to know the *ism* before we can know the man, rather than *vice versa*. Or looking at it another way: if there is no truth here, but only prejudice, we have to know Wagnerism in order to counteract it. In any case, the debt to Wagnerism has to be removed before we can begin collecting royalties on Wagner's art; examination of the ideology is important not only *per se* as a study of European culture of the last hundred years, but also as a step to an appreciation of Wagner as artist. The latter side of the question, of course, is the one that concerns the critic.

Wagner's whole career may be viewed from the standpoint of his development of Wagnerism. He first attracted mild attention in the 1840's, as a provincial conductor and composer of operas in which such careful observers as Spohr, Liszt, and Hanslick already appreciated qualities of restless novelty. And already Wagner was growing increasingly dissatisfied with the artistic situation as he knew it, and with the state of society as a whole. This dissatisfaction, aggravated by the fact that he was by this time heavily in debt, made him eagerly join Bakunin in the Dresden aftermath of the 1848 revolution, and participate actively enough to make it necessary for him to flee to Switzerland. Thus, more than he can ever have wished, Wagner found himself forced into a quixotic rupture with society, a break that he was hardy enough to turn into a heroic, pathetic — but in any case well-publicized pose. Exile also interrupted Wagner's career as a musician. Instead, he spent several years writing tracts, pamphlets, polemics, treatises, and hundreds



of letters in which ideas that had been in his head for some time settled into Wagnerism.

That this ideology assimilated much of the thought of the time is a commonplace; obviously it did, or it could not have succeeded so well. It may even be true that every important element had been enunciated separately before Wagner. His rôle was to formulate a brilliant synthesis, and perhaps the best approach to this is not through a consideration of its origins in intellectual history, but from the rather practical standpoint taken by Wagner himself. Wagner was first and foremost an artist. Basic to his thought was a special high calling for art, a high calling that may be succinctly characterized as 'magical'. R. G. Collingwood makes much of this term in his *Principles of Art*. A 'magical art', as he defines it, 'evokes of set purpose some emotions rather than others in order to discharge them into the affairs of practical life'. Magical art is to be distinguished from 'entertainment art', which evokes emotions simply to gratify the audience, and from 'art proper', which does not set out to *evoke* emotion at all, but instead to *express* emotion. Under magical we can readily group medieval art, religious art, patriotic art, and various low-brow forms of entertainment associated with weddings, balls, banquets, and the like. Even low-brow magical arts have an important part to play in society which Wagner coveted for himself; and as for the high-brow ones, he dreamed avidly of their dignity or dominance in the world of affairs. Greek drama was Wagner's favourite archetype, a festivity expressing no mere personal vision but the very life and soul of the city-state, directing, channelling, or controlling the powerful springs of human feeling to the common good. Had not Plato insisted that certain modes of music produce virtue, while others should be banished from the republic? 'Art as Expression', in Collingwood's sense, was altogether too private a concept for Wagner's aesthetic, as was Hanslick's notion of music as *tönend bewegte Formen*. 'Art as Entertainment', however, Wagner knew well and reviled, and 'Art as Magic', on the highest of high-brow levels and with Wagner as the grand wizard, was his ideal.

A basic commitment to magic is naturally a basic commitment to unreason. In the best romantic tradition, Wagnerism claimed that music-drama appealed to instinct rather than to reason. Many of Wagner's techniques bear this out, such as his opulent harmonic and orchestral sound, and his use of repetition sometimes to a soporific degree. 'Don't argue, repeat' might stand as Wagner's motto both in prose and in tone; the tactic of the demagogue. Taken collectively, moreover, the heroes of Wagner's mature works provide an exhaustive study of unintelligence in all its subtle shades: Siegfried the joyful savage, Parsifal the pure fool, Tristan whose intensity of will transcends law and life, Walther the spontaneous singer inspired by nature's birds and by the eternal Eve. (Walther does have his *Doppelgänger* to teach him form in addition to content. But even Sachs says of Walther's song: '*ich fühl's, und kann's nicht versteh'n*' — which is enough for Sachs; as a good Wagnerian, he goes ahead and does his all for the hero.) Critical discrimination, on the other hand, was anathema to Wagner, and unscrupulously

he pilloried criticism as pedantry and malice, making Beckmesser a personal caricature and a Jewish caricature for good measure. Wagner even opposed vivisection, an essentially analytical process which does indeed do violence to the *élan vital*.

But we are attempting to vivisect the ideology of magical art. In 1850, the ideal required two things: a new kind of art, and something to be magical about. To a 19th century German the second requisite lay easily to hand, in the gathering concept of the *Volk*, inchoate but free, impersonal but vital, true, and German. Wagnerism plunged headlong into German *Kultur*-mystique, with its corollaries of racial purity and anti-French sentiment; the one true rôle of art was to drive the communal national consciousness along its dynamic course into the future. All this Wagner upheld emphatically, not only in the writings of his exile, but also later in the manual of statesmanship that he drew up for Ludwig II, *Was ist deutsch?*, and in the runic meditations of his last years. His *Gesammelte Schriften* formed a rich mine for later generations of mystic nationalists.

As for the new kind of art—Wagner invented this, and it remains one of the most remarkable intellectual achievements of the century (in spite of his anti-intellectual attitude, which was not without an element of sham, as we shall see). Since Wagner's new art is to stir the *Volk*, it must reach a hitherto untouched audience. Only some sort of theatre, with its well-known appeal and its well-known mystique, can serve—an idea already fundamental for Schiller, as Carlyle had observed. Since communion is achieved not by reason but by feeling, and since music is the art closest to unrestrained emotion, the new art must be some sort of musical theatre. Not of course conventional opera—Franco-Jewish entertainment music at its most degenerate—but a new organic combination, a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The idea of synthesis, so dear to the romantic spirit, guarantees a super-art combining the virtues of all: drama served by music, poetry, gesture, and scenery. The subjects must stem from national myth, which presents eternal if cryptic truths in ideal, concentrated form. Since only feeling, not reason, can reach the *Volk*, a whole new armoury of technical stratagems is required. Limitation of dramatic 'business', piling up of repetitions, new breadth of time-scale, a new steady pitch of intensity, *Stabreim*, leitmotif, orchestral continuity, transformation scenes, 'endless melody', eight horns and four tubas—in the submerged orchestra pit—all these were developed for the new magic.

Add to this the historical anticipation interpreting this art as the chosen Art of the Future, and add to it the organic fallacy in aggravated form, and you have the main components of Wagnerian ideology. It was not enough for the orthodox to feel that each Wagner music-drama was a perfectly integrated work in itself; the seven of them formed a coherent *corpus*, sprung mystically from a basic seed. Thus far, at least, the organic ideal holds good: irrationality and *Volk* mystique cannot be dissociated from Wagner's concept of art or from his highly individual techniques. The ideal of 'Art as Magic' only makes sense in view of the mystique; the techniques only make sense in view of the intended function of the art.

The entire structure, as we have seen, was worked out in Wagner's head after his exile in 1849. For six years he wrote no music at all, but instead bombarded an astonished world with an ideology that seemed visionary nonsense—as *Mein Kampf* did in 1923. In 1853, however, Wagner published privately the libretto for a gigantic *Gesamtkunstwerk*, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, showing that he certainly meant business; and it soon became known that he had composed the first two parts of the *Ring*, as well as (in 1859) another mythical drama, *Tristan und Isolde*. Meanwhile, all that one actually heard was his early music, which could be pressed into the cause of Wagnerism only by means of outrageous special pleading. This was not lacking, and in 1860 Brahms, then aged 27, felt constrained to sign an unfortunate anti-modernist manifesto, thereby consolidating the corrosive rift in late 19th-century musical life. The manifesto served to magnify the Wagner myth. So did two famous fiascos of this period: the 1861 Paris riots over *Tannhäuser*, and the withdrawal of *Tristan und Isolde* from its intended *première* in Vienna after 77 fruitless rehearsals.

For years there was little prospect of Wagner's three extraordinary music-dramas being performed. Then, as is well known, his luck changed. The new king of Bavaria, though only eighteen, was already a rabid Wagnerian, and under his aegis Munich saw the first performances of *Tristan*, *Die Meistersinger*, *Rheingold*, and *Walküre* between 1865 and 1870. Incredible as it seemed, Wagner had succeeded; and the 19th century was fairly hypnotized by this success. Fascinating, also, was Wagner's ruthless personal life: his success with other men's wives, in his search for a mate who was also a Wagnerian, was a clear symbol of mastery not only for Wagner but also for his contemporaries—Siegfried the superman, after all, is rewarded by Brünnhilde. Wagner celebrated the war of 1870 by sending a triumphant *Kaisermarsch* to the Kaiser, and by circulating anonymously, and then actually publishing, a wretched skit mocking the fall of Paris, *Eine Kapitulation*. Wagnerism, he publicly suggested, should become the official ideology of resurgent Germany now firmly set on its historic mission. Bismarck was contemptuous, but Wagner had his way; and fifty years later, Hitler was not contemptuous.

Wagner's way was the most formidable move in the history of Wagnerism: Bayreuth. The time was ripe, with German nationalism at its height, with five Wagner music-dramas newly before the public, and with the most impressive intellectual tribute to Wagner about to be published: Nietzsche's first book, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*. In 1872 the cornerstone was laid for the Bayreuth Festival Theatre, a temple erected in an idyllic Mecca for celebratory performances of works specially to be created by the Master. For the opening rite (1876) nothing less impressive would serve than the great tetralogy (or, to follow Wagner's anxious analogy with Greek drama, the great trilogy with an introduction), based on the chief myth of the German *Volk*, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. As Bernard Shaw and others pointed out, Wagner's final implementation of his twenty-year-old plan did more credit to his Wagnerism than to his artistic integrity. To make the next



festival (1882) more awe-inspiring still, 'Art as Magic' was carried to its logical conclusion. *Parsifal*—a gigantic communion service, a static drama of priesthood—absorbs Christianity into Wagnerism as blandly as Arthurian romance had absorbed pagan grail rites into Christianity. *Parsifal*, too, looks back twenty years, to *Tristan und Isolde*, in a subtle, very interesting and yet curiously reactionary way.

As the Festivals at Bayreuth were held more frequently, their importance for the Wagner myth increased. Wagner had not only written, composed, fought, borrowed money, and stolen women—all prodigiously—he had also *built*; and the 19th century saw in the tangible symbol of the *Bühnenfestspielhaus* and the *Villa Wahnfried*, where Wagner's body rests, the consecration of Wagner as the superman for whom it had yearned since Carlyle. That Bayreuth instantly became not a shrine for a pure ideal, but a somewhat vulgar commercial enterprise, made no difference. This fact may have depressed Wagner, though not profoundly enough to hinder work on *Parsifal*, and it may have disgusted confirmed enemies like Nietzsche, who now saw in Wagner every abomination of 19th-century German culture. But confirmed friends, the pilgrim Wagnerians, the crowned heads and the humble members of the *Wagner-Vereine*—these responded, not to the realization, but to the ideal. Art had risen up and forced the world of affairs to make it a home and a temple. The artist was the acknowledged legislator of mankind.

More than 10,000 articles and books had been written about Wagner by the time of his death, and the climax of Wagnerism was still to come. The 1880's saw the French Wagnerian movement, inspired essentially by Wagner's writings (hard as that may be to believe today). Eduard Dujardin and Théodor Wyzewa of the *Revue Wagnérienne* were the standard bearers; Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and Mallarmé lent their authority; Catulle Mendès, Verlaine, Huysman, René Ghil, and Maurice Barrès served as the younger contingent. What fired the symbolists was the Wagnerian cult of feeling rather than reason. For this they were prepared to ignore Germanism so thoroughly as to rationalize *Eine Kapitulation* as a parody on German glee at the fall of Paris; they were prepared to conclude that music and an amalgamation of arts were inessential to Wagnerism. Of such paradoxes any mystique is capable. In England, true-blue Wagnerians (the adjective is Ernest Newman's) were issuing a magazine with the highly improbable title of *The Meister*. The late 1880's also produced Nietzsche's devastating critique. To counter this, the Bayreuth publicists found an even better tactic than their usual practice of ignoring, distorting or vilifying opponents. Piously they commiserated with mad Nietzsche, and pressed him to their breasts as a brother Wagnerian on the basis of his early books.

The final, violent stage of Wagnerism was a political one, or perhaps we should employ the term coined by the Wagnerians themselves: a meta-political one. For Peter Viereck, who developed this thesis in a furious book called *Metapolitics*, Wagnerism relates to Hitlerism as the most important single fountainhead. That a political leader liked to relax at the opera has in this case unusual and

ominous significance; Hitler's well-known devotion to *Lohengrin* and *Siegfried* was not merely a matter of affection, like the late Pope's affection for Bach, but a complete spiritual commitment. The line runs directly from the Bayreuth circle of Cosima Wagner and Houston Stewart Chamberlain to Alfred Rosenberg, Dietrich Eckart, and Adolf Hitler, who was introduced to Bayreuth in 1922. *Mein Kampf* is Wagnerian in style and content, and much later Hitler was to say, quite simply, that anyone who wishes to understand Nazi Germany must know Wagner. Much in Wagnerism the Nazis chose to ignore. But the 19th-century ideology provided soil and seed for all their key ideas: the communal spirit of the *Volk*, the relentless march into the future ('*Lebensraum*'), the goal of racial purity, the cult of might, the appeal to the irrational, the demagogic tactic of 'the big lie', and the mystic idea of the *Führer*.

This is not to say that Wagner could be claimed as a Nazi by retrospect, even if the Nazis did celebrate their victory at the polls in 1933 with a ceremonial performance of *Die Meistersinger*. They could not even make a Nazi opera out of what is, in actual fact and in spite of what everybody says, not even a very nationalistic piece. However they could manipulate it as symbol and as magic; and they were right to see the precursor of the *Führer* in the Wagnerian hero. By the same token, Beethoven could not be claimed as a Wagnerian, however frequently Wagner extolled and conducted the Ninth Symphony—to herald the Dresden uprising, to celebrate the laying of the cornerstone at Bayreuth. But again, the Wagnerians were right to see the precursor of Siegfried in Beethoven's ideal of the hero—if not perhaps that of the *Eroica* Symphony, at least in the Schilleresque *Held* of the B-flat *alla marcia* in the Ninth. The romanticism of the early 19th century became at a later stage Wagnerism, and Wagnerism became at a later stage the ideology of Nazism, altogether transcending the world of art.

## II

No further stage is set. As was observed at the beginning of this long excursus, the ideology of Wagnerism is by now essentially history. The present has its own up-to-date mystiques, but these can scarcely be traced to Bayreuth. Every once in a while, it is true, we catch the authentic Wagnerian *Nachklang*: I caught it last year at a lecture by Karlheinz Stockhausen, as he explained how the music of instruments and human expression must give way to the music of machines, and how a new concept of composition and a new type of concert-hall must come into existence—not *should* or *may* or even *will*, but *must* according to an unnamed but all-compelling historical necessity. Still, it was just an echo. Thus one of Wagner's debts has been squared, at the price of the Nazi *Götterdämmerung*, or *Götzerdämmerung*, as Nietzsche would have said. And today, while Nietzsche remains part of our intellectual heritage, Wagner seems to be in danger of becoming a forgotten man. Our debt to Wagner, that is to say, is for the most part neglected.

It was not always so. In the decades around 1900, when Wagnerism was a living issue, the tremendous artistic impact of Wagner's scores was fresh and unavoidable. Only now have we allowed this impact to dim with time—wrongly, I am sure. In those decades of musical revolution, dividing what is now called contemporary music from the 19th century, half the composers tried to develop the implications of Wagner's work, while the other half tried to contradict him. Then as now, the complex relationship between Wagner as composer and Wagnerism was a source of confusion, harassment, and depression. Yet on the whole, Wagnerism as *ideology* had less effect in music than in certain other fields.

That is not strange: according to the musician's limited, professional, matter-of-fact way of looking at things, Wagner was simply another musician. Ideology began only as he moved away from music. So while composers could be swept away by Wagner's technical innovations, they never quite grasped the ideology. For one thing, Bayreuth saw not the slightest need for a successor to the Meister. Richard Strauss, one musician who was able to take over Wagner lock, stock and barrel (and that with amazing facility), turned the whole apparatus away from magic towards entertainment; so that in a certain sense he may be said to have betrayed Wagnerism more profoundly than anyone else. Scriabin, who would have added Indian mysticism, colour, and scent to the already bulging *Gesamtheit* of Wagnerian orthodoxy, came to nothing. On the other hand, Bruckner and Hugo Wolf composed lasting symphonies and songs under the influence of certain of Wagner's techniques, but without any ideological superstructure. So decisive were these techniques at the historical juncture, indeed, that it was a follower of Wagner in this technical sense—not a follower of Brahms or Verdi or Rimsky-Korsakov—who became the key figure of the 20th-century musical revolution.

And today around Arnold Schoenberg and his school there still exists a split in musical life as jagged as that of Wagner's own time. This item of the Wagner *Nachlass* has not been paid off; if anything, we appear to have taken on a heavy second mortgage. Is it the same split, or some kind of modified continuation of the old one, or something altogether new? The question is certainly worth pursuing. In the contemporary musical consciousness, the importance of the twelve-tone phenomenon and serialism would be hard to over-emphasize.

Actually two schools are to be distinguished: the original Viennese twelve-tone group formed around Schoenberg, and the recent international serial group formed around the memory of Anton Webern, Schoenberg's radical pupil. Between both of these schools and musical Wagnerism, striking parallels appear at once, at any rate on the surface: the same apparatus of composers, favourite conductors and performers always ready to present their work, devotees and hangers-on, intellectuals and publicists, magazines, societies, little festivals. Though the modern movement has always been humbler in scope than Wagnerism, it has recently achieved a certain analogous chic. A little below the surface, the movements have in common the mode of polemic, the mood of an *élite*, and a rather innocent faith



in historical determinism. Like the Wagnerians, the serialists are marching along the one truly modern path, which has evolved inexorably from the past, in face of a reactionary opposition that is as powerful as it is underhand. Equally scornful are the members of this opposition, armed with arguments very similar, indeed, to those of the anti-Wagnerians: Twelve-tone music is too dissonant and chromatic for man or beast, too complicated, unsingable. It consists not exactly of 'endless melody', but certainly of an endless unarticulated flux. The steady high level of intensity frays the nerves (Hanslick complained of 'continuous nervous unrest' even in *Die Meistersinger*). According to a somewhat more elegant criticism, twelve-tone music is feeble rhythmically (Nietzsche on Wagner: 'the complete degeneration of the feeling for rhythm, *chaos* in the place of rhythm. . .'). Behind specific objections lies once again a suspicion that the music is being composed less for its own sake than to justify an abstract, extra-musical system. What is more—and this turns the historical argument back on itself—twelve-tone music is considered decadent on account of its roots. Wagner was accused of vulgarity *à la* Meyerbeer; Schoenberg is accused of tawdry romanticism *à la* Wagner. The twelve-tone school has to live with *Verklärte Nacht* and the Berg *Sonata*, just as Wagnerism had to live with the Prelude to the Third Act of *Lohengrin*.<sup>1</sup>

Now, even if there were no more connexion than this, it would seem to me highly significant that the *form* of the Wagnerian quarrel is so clearly echoed in the twelve-tone quarrel—even if the *content* were not. This whole way of thinking about music was unknown before Wagner; though we take it very much for granted today, it has its own peculiar modernity. However, surely the connexion lies deeper than the form of controversy alone; and with all due care and with all due sympathy in both directions, I should like to examine analogies in content. The essence of Wagnerism was a partly extra-musical structure and a mystique. But is not the very same true of serial music? Obviously the old structure and the old mystique differ enormously from the new; but, equally obvious, to me, is the similarity between the two schools simply on the basis of their essential orientations around *a* structure and *a* mystique.

Structure for the Wagnerians was a relentless multiplication of musical, poetic, dramatic, philosophical, and ideological details to create a magical *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Structure for the original twelve-tone school was a systematic application of a special method of composing. Starting with what has been called his 'precompositional assumption', the composer selects a set or row, a fixed ordering of the twelve available notes of the scale; then, as raw material, he uses pitches only in the sequence of the row, or of certain derivatives of the row (transposition, inversion, retrograde, and combinations of these). From these origins, the later serial school has developed methods controlling musical elements other than pitch—rhythm,

<sup>1</sup>With Wagner the accusation of vulgarity actually antedates *Rienzi*! Newman quotes the following remark by Heine, who knew Wagner in the Paris days: 'Do you know what makes me suspicious of this talent? The fact that he is recommended by Meyerbeer'.

timbre, dynamics, and so on—by means of analogous ‘precompositional assumptions’. To describe all this as structure will cause no difficulty, but to call a structure which is so directly involved with the act of musical composition ‘extra-musical’ or half-extra-musical may appear mistaken. I grant that the term as used here means something different from Wagnerian extra-musicality. Nevertheless: in the very concept of the row, exhaustive and rigorous as it is; in the frankly mathematical nature of the derivations and operations, notably with the latest serialists; and in the speculative quality of ‘precompositional assumption’ itself—in all these I think we can hardly fail to see something extra-musical at work. That vaguely similar things can be seen in some great composers of the past, too, in Josquin and Bach and Mozart and Wagner, proves merely that extra-musical ideas have been affecting great music for a long while.

What may cause more difficulty is reference to a twelve-tone or serial mystique. The fact is that serialism is felt (not thought: felt) to offer a key to the musically good. It provides control by formula over the raw material of music, it solves problems of logic and organization. Indeed, the mystique is essentially one of organic structure; to the most superficial twelve-tone sympathizers, application of numerical technique guarantees an organic whole, which for them is tantamount to success. The fantastic apparatus of mathematical set theory and acoustical formulae, the shibboleth of ‘total organization’, so-called—these belong to the most extreme new serialists, not to Webern or Schoenberg. Nevertheless, in a quieter form the idea of artistic success through increasingly firm control undoubtedly played its part with the original twelve-tone composers. The classic statement of this mystique has been made in artistic form, in Thomas Mann’s panoramic novel *Doctor Faustus*, whose hero is a mythical pioneer twelve-tone composer. The modern Faust achieves a ‘break-through to the subjective’—an equivocal redemption—through a diabolic pact whereby he renounces humanity and even reason, and enters into a cold bond with the mathematical and the occult, in order to gain the strictest objective mastery over artistic resources. This dialectic Mann presents unforgettably, with the greatest imaginative penetration and sympathy. Mann was also able to see Wagner more steadily than most observers.

Schoenberg, however, publicly repudiated the book; with half of his strange being he fought against mystique, which is certainly more than can be said of the advanced serialists. To Schoenberg and his most intelligent sympathizers, serialism is just a technique, a ‘method of composing with the twelve notes’, and true artistic problems come only after the ‘precompositional assumption’ and all the manipulations of the rows. The historical ‘necessity’ of Schoenberg’s development is always insisted on. But the trouble with this non-mystical explanation is that serialism, viewed merely as a working method, seems to everybody else artistically (if not perhaps historically) arbitrary, imposed from the outside, and above all laboured. Why this method rather than another? Why the passion for rigorous application, which could bring Schoenberg himself in his late years to incorporate dogmatic

members of his row in inaudible grace-note chords?<sup>2</sup> And conversely, what justification can be found for so-called 'free' twelve-tone composers—composers who are, as it were, just a little bit pregnant? Viewed as a mystique, however, the twelve-tone system presents no problems at all. Number mystiques have nourished the arts since the time of Pythagoras, with good results as well as bad. It is certainly not remarkable that in this scientific, uncertain age, musicians and artists should seek a talisman.

I should not like there to be any misunderstanding about the manifest differences between Wagnerism and serialism. The new mystique is a compositional mystique, not a world view. The new structure is a technical structure, and even its extra-musical quality may be said to be technical rather than philosophical. The twelve-tone and the serial schools avoid magic, demagoguery, and even personality; the very names are not 'Schoenbergism' but terms severely expressive of technique; the literature appears in magazines called not *The Meister*, *La Revue Wagnérienne*, *Bayreuther Blätter*, but *The Score*, *Polyphonie*, *Die Reihe*; most (not all) of this literature is highly professional, beginning with Schoenberg's *Harmonielehre*. Personality is not the issue here; if it were, we might reflect on the ironic, indeed tragic contrast between Wagner and Schoenberg in the outward course of their careers and in their conduct. In serialism the *Führer* concept is totally absent, as irrelevant to a technical movement as it was essential to Wagner's all-embracing ideology; consequently serialism has more than one master, and is exerting a more profound, more flexible influence on the course of music than Wagnerism ever did, for all its pride in romantic dynamism.

All this is true; yet there is one more bond, and this bond is the deepest one, between Wagner and the twelve-tone system. In the historical moment, Schoenberg did not proceed illogically. He was facing the great problem in musical style that he inherited from Wagner—the problem stated emblematically in a famous book-title: *Romantische Harmonik und ihre Krise in Wagners Tristan*.<sup>3</sup> Romantic music, seeking to mirror the inner life of feeling, had instinctively tended to obscure clarity of form wherever possible and had seriously disrupted the classical framework of harmony and tonality. Seeking intense expressivity, romantic music leaned towards more and more chromaticism; a tendency that weakened the tonal system very specifically, by drawing attention away from harmony and towards linear impulsion. All this came to a head in *Tristan*. This score challenged the very postulates of music as it was known: the central focus of a tonic note, triad, or key; the accepted hierarchy of other notes, triads, or keys in reference to the tonic; the standard rhetoric of tendencies and relationships between one sound and another. For fifty years music hovered anxiously around this challenge, which Wagner took care to aggravate by many vexed, beautiful passages in his later operas. At first Schoenberg wrestled with musical organization quite in Wagner's spirit, but as he followed

<sup>2</sup>The example of the grace-note chords (in Schoenberg's *Violin Concerto*) is from George Perle's article, *Theory and Practice in Twelve-Tone Music—The Score*, Summer 1959.

<sup>3</sup>A study by Ernst Kurth, published in 1920.



through the implications of *Tristan*, the question of musical repetition, in particular, grew more and more problematic. Schoenberg's solution was to leave classical tonality altogether, and organize music in a radically different way. As a frame of reference for the 'rightness' of sounds he developed the serial principle, self-defined by a private 'precompositional assumption' rather than accepted according to the tacit tradition of tonality.

It was obvious that Wagner had brought music to a breaking-point. What caused the crisis, it is hardly necessary to add, was not simply the interesting nature of his searching experiments, but rather the authority and integrity of his operas as works of art. The situation was desperate enough; all serious composers in the early part of the century were trying to erect some kind of structure with the fallen bricks of classical tonality. That Schoenberg and Webern should have attempted a drastic solution is much less remarkable than the character of that solution: the rigid systematization with its strong leanings towards a mathematical mystique. The interesting fact is that analogies to this rigid systematization—the way they arranged the bricks—are already evident in the Wagner operas.

This seems a paradox; Wagnerism is dogged by paradox. What has Wagner's cult of irrationality and his endless, vague, emotional trance to do with a technique which has been accused of being cold and mathematical—and which, it must be said, has never properly nullified the accusation? The paradox runs all through romanticism, starting before 1800 with Novalis's maxim of '*Systemlosigkeit in ein System*'. On the one hand, this idea glorifies irrationality, on the other, it sets up a system. And so it must be for the artist; romanticism might seek to imitate life in its elusive, self-contradictory chaos, but the artist if he wanted to do anything at all—whether to express his soul or to influence others magically—had to come to a point. Art has to impose form on content. Perhaps, indeed, the more the artist wishes to give the impression of formlessness, the more firmly must he maintain the secret bondage of form. The slice of life, the stream of consciousness, the impressionist haze, and the expressionist nightmare are far from formless in their technical realization. The paradox comes out in Maurice Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, for instance, a play dear to musicians on account of the beautiful (and curiously Wagnerian) musical setting by a leading anti-Wagnerian, Debussy. The action appears to revolve around moody *non-sequiturs* and aimless people drifting in and out; but just below the surface lies the chromium grid of the well-made play. The paradox comes in *Ulysses*, a dream-like evocation organized more minutely than any other major work of literature since the *Divine Comedy*. It comes in Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, whose subject is crack-up, and whose form is an odd anthology of tight, purely-musical structures.

In the music of the 19th century it was Wagner who reflected the paradox of Novalis most strongly. He worked and schemed for his magic. The ancient Egyptian priesthood is said to have made secretly a great scientific discovery, steam power, in order to rig miracles. A later age unmasked them; and though Wagner's

*Gesammelte Schriften* are conspicuously silent on the subject of intellectual structures, these become more and more apparent as analysts vivisection the scores themselves. For Wagner, intellectual organization was first of all a matter of leitmotif structure, as was well understood at the time. The function of the leitmotif is manifold: to work an elaborate cross-reference system for presumptive dramatic good, as well as to explain the action to an audience which is by design half-unmusical, but which as a communing body must not be left in doubt. Another function is technical: as the musical continuity grows larger and more tenuous, the time-scale expands, and tonality becomes more vague, it is urgent to have as many organizing themes as possible—to have many focal points, as it were, around which the fog can precipitate. Sometimes Wagner handled leitmotifs in a drab, mechanical way. With this in mind, Jacques Barzun interprets Wagner less as a romantic than as a ‘mechanist’—the insight is important, though the conclusion does not necessarily follow.

In addition to leitmotif structure, Wagner used minute organization by phrase, period, and key. The ‘endless melody’ is structured down to the bone. Guido Adler seems to have understood this first, around the turn of the century, and his ideas were greatly exaggerated in the Wagner analyses of Alfred Lorenz, which are notorious in musicology as the *locus classicus* for Procrustean lopping. Nevertheless, although half of what Lorenz saw in Wagner existed only on his own drawing-board, the other half was true, important, and something of a revelation. For instance, it had often been said that in spite of his claim to be following Beethoven, Wagner worked his themes less by development than by repetition and sequence; what had not been realized was how rigorously, ‘mechanistically’ indeed, this work often proceeded. Furthermore, very curious long-range structures came to light. To take an example from *Die Meistersinger*: the Overture is built around four keys (C, E, E-flat, and C again); then four hours later, and at ten times the length, the final scene of the opera is built around exactly the same keys. Another example, from *Tristan*: the piece begins in A minor and ends in B; the key directly between them, E, is somehow avoided in all the hundreds of modulations contained in the opera—avoided and saved for one appearance: the beautiful passage in Act III where Tristan attains his maximum serene consciousness (*‘Wie sie selig, hehr und milde wandelt’*). An example from *Parsifal*: to conclude the opera on a note of huge serenity, Wagner picked on the sound of a plagal cadence, already at hand in his ‘Grail’ motif, the so-called ‘Dresden Amen’. After moving from D up a fifth to A, he moves up another fifth to E, up another, and another, and another—six times in all, exactly half-way round the full tonal circle.

This type of organization is far from twelve-tone organization; but the two have in common a mood, a quality, and that is their schematic character. An artist who would go so far towards systematization as to multiply a progression six times, might go the rest of the way and group all twelve notes of the scale in a set pattern. An artist so hyper-sensitive to the key of E major, in the five-hour flux of *Tristan und Isolde*, might develop similar concern for the very note E, and once he had

sounded it, might not want it again until all the eleven other notes had intervened. The parallelism of keys in *Die Meistersinger* raises a crucial question: has this structure any aesthetic import, or is it purely speculative? Is it *heard*, or is it an instance of 'paper' organization? Something similar could be asked about *Ulysses* and the Pound *Cantos*. The very same question is asked all the time about serial music, not only with reference to its small-scale formation around the row, but also to its modes of coherence on a larger scale. In contemporary criticism this question is fundamental, and the analogy with Wagner should help to provide the answer: or *vice versa*.

Analogy only; analogy in spirit, not in actual detail. With this reservation clear, the relation between Wagner and contemporary music may be seen to be more than simply one of historical sequence. Wagner's musical organization prefigures in a certain respect Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique, and also the fantasy of 'total organization' developed by Stockhausen and others. The new technical mystique depends even more critically than the Wagnerian on the illusion of a perfect organism, on the indestructibility of works that must be judged according to their own 'precompositional assumption', on their technical virtuosity, on their logic and economy. And while 'economy' is probably the last word that anyone would think of applying to Wagner, it does finally explain itself as the corollary to Wagner's insistence on organic synthesis. That a technical, even hermetic aspect of Wagnerism should survive in modern music while more blatant aspects are discredited, is characteristic of the resolute technical limitation of the serialists.

### III

Recently I spent an afternoon looking through the literature on Schoenberg's unfinished opera *Moses and Aaron*. Much of this literature is by twelve-tone adherents, and some of it is pretty impressive stuff; yet the name of Wagner scarcely appears. In its fundamental dramatic conception, however, *Moses and Aaron* is the most egregiously Wagnerian piece since *Parsifal*. I am not implying that the piece sounds like Wagner, or that Schoenberg's philosophy or rhetoric resemble Wagner's; I am simply saying that in its fundamental dramatic conception, *Moses and Aaron* is the most egregiously Wagnerian piece since *Parsifal*. It is a didactic racial epic of momentous import. The concept of the *Volk*, indeed the very term, occurs more prominently than it ever does in Wagner, even in *Die Meistersinger*. The libretto, *gauche* as only a home-made libretto can be, treats in symbolic terms of universal ethical and political problems; and if Bernard Shaw could see Bakunin and contemporary socialist doctrine in the *Ring*, I can certainly see in *Moses and Aaron* the idealistic Zionism of Theodore Herzl and Rabbi Magnes pitted against the political Zionism of Ben-Gurion. The action consists of static dialogues



arranged in a stiff dialectic plan—with the exception of the famous Golden Calf scene, where stage directions out-Wagner Wagner's vanishing castles, swimming Rhine-maidens and magic fires: four Naked Virgins are to be stabbed and their blood caught in cups, after which, rapacious stripping of the chorus is the order of the day. There is blood, sex, *Liebestod*, even the indispensable *Schlange*. There is a direct parallel to, and derivative of, *Stabreim*. There is the by-now-customary rigorous construction and enormous complexity of the score. Close on 400 rehearsals were required for the first performance—shades of *Tristan*!—and that first performance came twenty years after the work was composed; facts which the enthusiasts have greeted with the customary cries of martyrdom and panegyric.

*Moses and Aaron* belongs to this discussion for several reasons. First of all, it bears witness to an almost unbelievable survival of Wagnerian dramatic conception in the work of the central, inescapable, brooding figure of 20th-century music. Secondly, it shows how skittishly Wagner is handled today even by the *élite* (for so the twelve-tone adherents regard themselves). Wagner stands for romanticism and in some obscure way for bogus; his name would dirty the modern masterwork. Thirdly, and this is the serious reason—here we are dealing with Schoenberg's largest, most ambitious, and according to many critics his greatest work. It is a work that should be in our ears right now; for the posthumous first performance was only in 1954; the first stage performance came three years later; and the third performance took place not long ago in Berlin, to the accompaniment of mild riots. *Moses and Aaron* has the authentic aura of a masterpiece. What is to be made of this piece, with its new problematic dimensions added to the standard difficulty of any Schoenberg score?

The question, which is scarcely to be met by marching along with any school or ism, may be helped by Wagner. If for no other reason, Wagner is needed today to help clarify *Moses and Aaron*. Every element in the latter that calls for clarification—the mystique, the complication, the innocence, the impact, the aura—has its analogous element (not identical, but analogous) in the Wagner canon. It should be as unthinkable to deny the defects of *Moses* as to deny those of *Parsifal*; it is equally unthinkable to deny the transcendent artistic power of either work on account of defects. Of course nothing will be settled by speculative analogy. What counts always is the critical ear. But the old work can help to provide an approach to the new. The same applies *pari passu* to twelve-tone music in general, as has been suggested; though there, obviously, the relationship is a good deal more complex.

In short, we have to settle Wagner's debts, and then we have to settle our own debt to Wagner, if our credit is to be really good for contemporary music. Answers are needed to the questions about bogus, vulgarity, insincerity, magic, over-extension, over-complication, paper organization, organic structure and the unquestionable incandescence that the operas still attain. I suggest only one preliminary axiom: resist all pressure to regard the *oeuvre* as an inviolable, neces-

sary, superbly-constructed organic whole. There is no such artistic entity as 'Wagner'; only four fantastic works of art—*Tristan* and *Parsifal*, the *Ring*, *Die Meistersinger*—with their successful and unsuccessful aspects, with their great beauties and their *bétises*. Structural organization is not the issue. Even this much, perhaps, suggests an approach to more recent music, and indicates the importance of the half-historical, half-critical study that Wagner seems to require, a hundred years after *Tristan*.

## SOME LECTURES BY WEBERN

*Roberto Gerhard*

Dr. Willi Reich has recently published a series of lectures given by Webern in Vienna in 1932 and 1933.<sup>1</sup> Some remarks made by Webern in the course of private lessons to Dr. Reich are also included, and a few letters from amongst those received from him during the important years between 1938 and 1944. The lectures were delivered to a lay audience in a private house. As one would expect, this circumstance was bound to affect Webern both in his choice of subject matter and in his manner of approach. He was extemporising, not reading from prepared notes. Occasionally he would illustrate points at the piano or play extensively from the works he was discussing. A member of the audience took the lectures down in shorthand, and this is how they have been preserved. Some of the musical examples—probably only a few out of the number presented—are also quoted in the text.

The person who took the notes must have been a most accomplished stenographer. They read like a genuine *verbatim* transcript. In every word and turn of phrase, this is certainly Webern at his most spontaneous. The impression is so strong that one is irresistibly reminded even of matters of intonation. The characteristic accent-curve in Webern's individual manner of speaking makes itself felt in every sentence. In writing, in letters especially, this would result in a lavish use of exclamation marks, one for stress, two for emphasis, three for strong feelings, four for passion, five for rapture. The unique documentary value of a record that shows us Webern caught, as it were, in the very act of thinking aloud, is no doubt the most treasurable aspect of the publication. As regards the content, anyone who would expect to find answers here to the sort of questions we would like to ask Webern today, is likely to be disappointed. No new light is shed on the fundamental processes of thought behind the work of the composer who has most profoundly affected the course of evolution in musical matters since the war. In particular, none of the issues raised by the new *échelons* of contemporary leadership in connexion with Webern's work, are so much as touched upon. This may prove disconcerting to young readers who have formed a mental picture of their Webern from interpreting his scores in the light of statistical methods of analysis as propounded, for example, by *Die Reihe*. The quantitative element is of course fundamental to all music. To a certain extent and purely intuitively, the masters

<sup>1</sup>Universal Edition, Vienna 1960. See the translated excerpts on pages 29 to 37 of this issue.



have been conscious of it at all times. It has been left to our experimental age to discover the pitfalls of systematic parameter-manipulation. In this context the Webern lectures, with their strong, almost exclusive emphasis on roots and tradition, are a timely and potentially salutary reminder. Unfortunately it is just this aspect of his message which, I am afraid, is most likely to fall on deaf ears.

Insistently Webern keeps on reminding us of all that we tend to slur over and wish to overlook in his work. So much so, that a naïve reader might be forgiven for pausing in bewilderment to ask himself: did Webern really know how revolutionary he was? He most certainly did. Of course, he would have repudiated the word 'revolutionary' as emphatically as Schoenberg did—four exclamation marks.

Not that it matters, but it was never clear to me to what extent Webern's life-long association with the Austrian socialist party may have rested on actual political convictions. His background, I suppose, could have been described as *gut bürgerlich*, the same as Schoenberg's though a little more upper-middle-class. It is interesting how often the seed of far-reaching innovatory change happens to germinate in a social layer characterized by the more typically bourgeois virtues, conservatism, moderation, respect for traditional values, a sense of responsibility, a strong distaste for the wayward and madcap, and all that. Their common bourgeois origin is equally typical of the personalities of innovators like Marx or Lenin. It is as if the combination of conservative temper and exceptional powers of analysis and imagination would generate, in the very tension of opposites, the highest degree of will and vision necessary to bring about a major re-arrangement in any field of human affairs. The point here is that Webern's rootedness in classical working-models and modes of thought, far from obscuring his own radicalism, explains it.

The plan in the lectures is to show, along historical lines, the emergence of novelty in music; when, how and why things that had not been thought of, said or done before, happen to come about. By tracing the connexions between new and old and by pinpointing the change-promoting factors, Webern hopes to underline certain regularities from which something like general laws of change might be deduced. Schoenberg's innovations in particular are to be considered in this light. The idea is ambitious but perfectly sound. If the demonstration turns out to be something like a bird's-eye view of a very large subject, one can only regret, once again, that Webern should have been addressing a lay audience on that occasion. A thoroughgoing inquiry was obviously out of the question. Only landmarks and highlights could be picked out. Even so the ranks of his listeners seem to have thinned out rapidly, to judge from an ironic aside at the beginning of the fourth lecture.

To my mind a thrilling moment occurs when we reach the year 1908, the date of Schoenberg's piano pieces Op. 11. 'The times were ripe for the disappearance of tonality'. We are familiar with the facts and with the circumstances from which they originated. Less well known is the frame of mind in which these facts were

faced when Schoenberg and his disciples first became conscious of their implications. Probably few young composers nowadays have the faintest idea of the anxieties, of the tremendous heart-searching the pioneers went through when matters did come to a head. And no wonder. The new means made available by the break-through have come to be taken so much for granted today, that almost any sense of struggle and personal effort in acquiring them has vanished. The young advanced composer now takes to them as a duck to water. They have become part of his genetic equipment, you might say. Nor is that all. A similar mutation must have occurred in the professional critic. The passionate resistance to innovation, characteristic of the heroic days, has given way to bland acceptance, tinged at most with gingerly reservations. Daring to face the opprobrium of not being 'in the know'—if you are an intelligent person—takes some real integrity. The rank and file critic and the rank and file advanced composer alike seem to have become 'progressive' more by way of conditioning and conforming than as a result of a soul-shaking crisis. Bitter and frustrating as the fight against the recalcitrant critic of old must have been, there can be little doubt which is the more enervating to the creative artist. Webern has no more than a passing word for the battles fought. But time and again he comes back to the intellectual and affective upheaval which accompanied the decision to discard classical tonality.

'I am speaking to you as one who has lived these things through.' 'It was a hard struggle; inhibitions of the most terrifying kind had to be overcome; there was an anxious questioning: is that really possible?' 'As if the light had given out—that's how it struck us.'

It is not easy for us to recapture this state of mind. On the other hand it helps us to understand Schoenberg's, and of course Webern's, almost exclusive concern with matters of tonal organization. Not that rhythm, dynamics, or tone-colour were absent from their preoccupations. Far from it. Colour, to a certain extent, but metre and rhythm in particular (which in Brahms's innovations are still simply concomitants, part and parcel of very personal qualities of style) clearly stand out for the first time in Schoenberg and Webern as factors specifically grasped and used for specific ends. Pitch, nevertheless, is undoubtedly the main concern. Webern's insistence on *Zusammenhang* (coherence, consistency, relatedness) and *Fasslichkeit* (comprehensibility), recurring *leitmotifs* in the lectures, makes it abundantly clear that to him, as indeed to Schoenberg, relatedness depends primarily and overridingly on *tonal* organization. In other words, thematicism is still the sovereign principle. Hence both masters' unwavering allegiance to classical concepts of form-building and, in particular, Webern's predilection for contrapuntal and canonic devices, as the most concentrated means for enhancing thematic relatedness.

'The style aimed at by Schoenberg and his school is a new interpenetration of the horizontal and the vertical facets, a polyphony that has reached its peaks so far with the Netherlands and with Bach, and then again with the classics. Always

the same endeavour to derive from one main idea the utmost possible. One has got to put it like this, since we are still writing in the forms of the classics. These have not disappeared. What the classics created in the way of highly evolved art-forms is still to be found in the new music. . . . Then let's hold fast to this: we have not gone beyond the forms of the classics. What has come since is simply variation, expansion, reduction—but the forms have stayed—in Schoenberg too.'

In the last lecture Webern says that a twelve-note series is not as a rule (not in general) to be regarded as a *theme*. Indeed, he admits that 'thanks to the use of other means for achieving unity, I can also work now without thematicism—that is, much more freely: the series assures me of *Zusammenhang*'. The end-statement of this quotation, incidentally, I would be prepared to contradict. However, the point is that with these words tonal organization is once again clearly shown to be conceived as the guarantor not only of *Zusammenhang* but also of the larger-scale notion of *unity* underlying it. If this be regarded as half the truth, as I think it must, it has also to be stressed emphatically that in no way did it preclude Webern the composer from seeing the whole truth and, what is more important, from acting upon the whole truth. Indeed it is mainly through Webern's work that we have been made aware of the high *Zusammenhang*-coefficient inherent in other-than-tonal factors, such as metre (as soon as it ceases to be merely a scanning device), rhythm, span of events, *Gestalt* of eventuation, dynamics (as soon as they cease to be used as subservient to phrasing, and are employed to structural ends instead), and above all motion itself, in its own right, understood specifically in the sense of passage, process, continuity, shift from uniqueness to uniqueness of moment, *corso-ricorso*, and others that would make the list longer still.

It seems to me that the reason why Webern's work has been more seminal than Schoenberg's in these particulars, is that they show in stronger isolation in Webern's music. Though equally present in Schoenberg, they are harder to disentangle from the total integument. The denudation in Webern has the effect of throwing the activity of the new factors into high relief. Thus they appear in a strikingly pure state. Consequently the whole economy of the work has almost the quality of a demonstration. The miracle—and this is the secret of Webern's alchemy—is how wonderfully this quality blends with the poetic quality of the music. All the same, the fact that Webern is so neatly and analyzable should not be underestimated when evaluating his impact on the post-war generation. That Schoenberg's work should have suffered a comparative eclipse as a result, is in the nature of the case. It will only be temporary. No one would probably have been more amazed at this than Webern himself. What is certain is that nothing could have been more distressing to him than to see his work extolled at the expense of Schoenberg's. Anyone who could have talked of Schoenberg to him as 'dead' would have been received not only with a volley of exclamation marks but also with a memorable rap on the knuckles. If proof is needed, it can be found in the lectures.



## TOWARDS A NEW MUSIC<sup>1</sup>

*Anton Webern*

### I

Today let us examine modern music with an eye to the two factors that we have recognized as the most important; the conquest of the whole tonal field and the articulation of ideas!

First I want to talk about the articulation of ideas. . . . I said the other day that after the Netherland polyphonic style had passed its climax, at the beginning of the 17th century, composers all began to strive towards clarity of form. This led to the development of those classical forms which found their purest expression in Beethoven: the period and the eight-bar phrase.

It is a fact, and nobody can disprove it, that everything which has happened since then can be traced back to these forms. . . . We should be clear about what happened (in sonata form): the aim was always articulation of an idea. With Beethoven we reach the end of the development of those forms in which ideas are articulated. What happened after Beethoven—in Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Bruckner, Mahler—all makes use of these forms, just as does our music, the music of today. In other words, the development lasted about two hundred years, from Bach's predecessors to Beethoven. . . .

What, then, is this articulation of ideas? An upper part and its accompaniment. This distribution of space produced the forms. We have often mentioned the tendency to create an ever denser unity, in the interests of comprehensibility. How has this urge made itself felt since the time of the classical composers? Without theorizing, we would put it like this: at an early stage composers began to exploit and to extend to the rest of the texture the material present in the upper part. To put it schematically, particular attention was given to the development of the motifs contained in the shapes of the upper part. Nothing was to fall from heaven—everything was to be related to what was already present in the principal part. There was very soon, in fact, an attempt to remain 'thematic', to derive things from the principal theme. . . . I have spoken of the development as the central place for the 'treatment' of the theme. Now, how does this happen? By repeating the theme in various combinations, by introducing the course of thematic events not only horizontally but also vertically—once again the emergence of polyphonic

<sup>1</sup>The first part (pp. 29 to 32) is taken from the seventh talk in the series *Der Weg zur neuen Musik*; the second part (pp. 32 to 37) consists of extracts from Talks 4, 5 and 7 in the series *Der Weg zur Komposition in zwölf Tönen*. These excerpts are copyright by Universal Edition A. G. Vienna and are translated and published with their permission.

thought. And here the classical composers often arrived at forms modelled on those of the 'old Netherlanders'—by way of canon and imitation. I should also point out that in Bach's time, in his own works in fact, one form of articulation was particularly developed: the fugue. This is a kind of shape that arose directly from the urge to create a maximum of unity; everything is derived from the theme. The symphonic form of the classical composers also resorted to this, and it is very remarkable that what we know as fugue did not in fact exist at the time of the Netherlanders. For the fugue derived from instrumental music. Here a polyphonic form of musical thought developed quite aside from vocal music.

We have also referred to Bach in connexion with the enrichment of the tonal field. *For everything happens in Bach*: the development of cyclic forms, the conquest of the tonal field—and, staggering polyphonic thought! Horizontally and vertically . . . (Webern goes on to mention *The Art of Fugue*) . . . All these fugues are created from one single theme, which is constantly transformed; a thick book of musical ideas, whose whole content arises from a single idea!

What does all this mean? An effort towards an all-embracing unity. It is derived from one source, from the single fugue-theme! Everything is 'thematic'. And now we find this creeping into the later forms, in the development section—which became the favourite *rendezvous*, in succession to the fugue. Step by step the 'accompaniment' too shows the tendency to work 'thematically'; a change, an extension of the original primitive forms has begun. So we see that this—our—kind of thought has been the ideal for composers of all periods. . . .

To develop everything from a single principal idea! That's the strongest unity—when everybody does the same; as with the Netherlanders, where the theme was introduced by each individual part, altered in every possible way, with different entries and in different registers. But in what form? That's where art comes in! But the watchword must always be, 'Thematicism, thematicism, thematicism!'

One form plays a special rôle: the variation. Think of Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*. Great composers have sometimes chosen something quite banal as the basis for variations. Again and again we find the same tendency to write music in which the greatest possible unity is guaranteed. Later, variation found its way into the sonata, particularly in Beethoven's second movements, but above all in the finale of the Ninth Symphony, where everything can be traced back to the eight-bar period of the principal theme. This melody had to be as simple and comprehensible as possible; on its first appearance it is even given out in unison, just as the Netherlanders started off by writing down the five notes from which everything was derived. Constant variations of one and the same thing! Let us pursue this further! Brahms and Reger took it up. Bach, too, had already written in this way. In fact, Bach composed everything, concerned himself with everything demanding musical thought.

The accompaniment, however, also grew into something else; composers were anxious to give particular significance to the complex which went together with the

main idea, to give it more independence than a mere accompaniment. Here the main impetus was given by Gustav Mahler; this is usually overlooked. In this way accompanimental forms grew into a series of counter-figures to the principal theme—and that is, indeed, polyphonic thinking! The style, then, which Schoenberg and his school are seeking is a new inter-penetration of the musical material in the horizontal and vertical dimensions: a polyphony which has so far reached its climaxes in the Netherlands and in Bach, then later in the classical composers. There is this constant effort to derive as much as possible from one principal idea. It has to be put like this, for we, too, are writing in classical forms, which haven't vanished. All the ingenious forms discovered by these composers also occur in the new music. It is not a matter of bringing back the music of the Netherlands, but of refilling their forms by way of the classics; of linking these two things. Naturally it is not purely polyphonic thinking; it is both at once.

So let us hold fast to this: we have not advanced beyond the classical composers' forms. What happened after them was only alteration, extension, abbreviation; but the forms remained, even in Schoenberg!

All this has remained—but something has altered, all the same: namely the effort to produce an ever closer unity and so to come back to polyphonic thinking. Brahms has particular significance in this respect—and also, as I said, Gustav Mahler . . . with him, we reach modern times.

Now I should like to cast a quick glance at the other point: the extension of the tonal field.

Last time, I quoted a chorale harmonization by Bach, to show that something already existed there that was not superseded by the later, classical composers, nor even by Brahms; one cannot imagine anything more meaningful than these constructions of Bach's! . . . They are models of musical thinking on the basis of the two genders, major and minor, which were fully developed by then! . . . He never tired of these chorales. For practical purposes? No, for artistic purposes! He wanted *clarity*!

And yet it was this which sowed the fatal seeds in major and minor. As in the church modes the urge to create a cadence led to the 'pleasanter' semitone, the leading-note, and everything else was swept away, so it was here, too; major and minor were torn apart, pitilessly, the fatal seed was there! Why do I talk so much about this? Because for the last quarter of a century major and minor have no longer existed! Only, most people still do not know. It was so attractive to fly ever further into the remotest tonal regions, and then to slip back again into the warm nest, the original key! And suddenly one did not come back—such a loose chord<sup>2</sup> is so ambiguous! It was a fine feeling to draw in one's wings; but in the

<sup>2</sup>Webern's expression is 'So ein Luder von Akkord'.



end one found it was no longer so necessary to return to the keynote. Until Beethoven and Brahms, one didn't really get any further—but then a composer appeared who blew the whole thing apart: Wagner. And then Bruckner and Hugo Wolf; and Richard Strauss also came and had his turn—very ingenious!—and many others; and that was the end of major and minor.

Summing-up, I would say: just as the church modes disappeared and gave way to only two modes, so these two have also disappeared and made way for a single series: the chromatic scale. Relation to a keynote—tonality—has been lost. But this belonged to the other chapter, on articulation of ideas. The relationship to a keynote gave those structures an essential foundation. It helped to build their form, in a certain sense it produced unity. This relation to a keynote was the essence of tonality. As a result of all the events mentioned, this relationship first became less necessary and then disappeared altogether. . . . Harmonic complexes arose, of a kind that made the relationship to a keynote superfluous. All this happened between Wagner and Schoenberg, whose first works were still tonal. But in the harmony he developed, the relationship to a keynote became unnecessary, and this meant the end of something which has been the basis of musical thought from the days before Bach to our time; major and minor disappeared. Schoenberg expresses this by a comparison: double gender has given rise to a higher gender!

## II

Today we shall examine tonality in its last throes. I want to prove to you that it is really dead. . . .

Last time we discussed chords built from the whole-tone scale, and arrived at a six-note chromatic passing chord. . . . Simply by adding one such chord to another of analogous construction, we produce a twelve-tone chord.

With all these things, we approach the catastrophe: 1906, Schoenberg's *Chamber Symphony* (fourth-chords!); 1908, music by Schoenberg which is no longer in any key. Relationship to a keynote became ever looser. This produced a state in which one could finally dispense with the keynote. The possibility of rapid modulation has nothing to do with this development; in fact just because all this happened in order to safeguard the keynote—to extend tonality—precisely because we took steps to preserve tonality—we broke its neck!

I go out into the hall to knock a nail in. On my way there, I decide I would rather go out. I obey the impulse, get into a train, come to a railway station, go on travelling and finally end up—in America! That is modulation!

Now consider Schoenberg's George songs Op. 15! Nos. II and V: no more return to the keynote, everyone feels the end anyway. And No. VII (accompani-

ment for one hand only): how Schoenberg returns at the end to what happened at the beginning!

*Nicht zu rasch (J. ca. 80)*

Angst und Hoffen wechseln mich be-klem-men, mei-ne Wor-te sich in

Seuf-zer deh-nen;

*Sehr langsam*

dass ich keines Freundes Trost be-ge-h-re.

dass ich keines Freundes Trost be-ge-h-re.

dass ich keines Freundes Trost be-ge-h-re.

dass ich keines Freundes Trost be-ge-h-re.

It's only a question of different means. The song returns to its opening. To anyone with a refined sense of form it was all over, and a repetition would sound trivial.

It is clear that this period really started with the George songs Op. 15. You will recall the first song of Schoenberg's Op. 14 ('Ich darf nicht dankend'), which has a key signature with two sharps, and which still ends in B minor. In No. II of the George songs it would also be possible, particularly towards the end, to make out a key; one could conceivably take it as G Major and add a G Major chord at the end.

The musical score is for a song by Schoenberg, Op. 15, No. II. It is written in G major and 4/4 time. The score consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line with the lyrics "und die goldenen Birsen säuseln" and the piano accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "doch mein Traum verfolgt nur Eines." and the piano accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "espress.", "pp", "sf", and "p". The tempo marking "molto rit." is used twice. The piano accompaniment features complex chordal structures and melodic lines.

Why is it still so in one case, and no longer so in the other? What is the explanation? With this question we really penetrate into the inmost mystery of twelve-tone music.

Rather than answer this question at once, I should like to show you some more examples, in order to illustrate again how gradually the change came about.



and how in fact it is impossible to fix a boundary between old and new. Please understand: my reference to a keynote is intended to show how much all these changes still took place within the bounds of harmony. There is hardly a single consonant chord any longer. But though things had gone so far, we still find the very important factor which governed music for hundreds of years—this exploitation of relationship to a key.

Schoenberg's Op. 11: three piano pieces (written about 1908):

No. 1: ends on E flat—it doesn't close in any key. The final bass note is the fundamental. How does the piece come to have E flat as a fundamental note? Let us look at the opening: up to bar 13, every note of the chromatic scale occurs, with the exception of E flat!

No. 2: I ask in the same way: how does Schoenberg come to end with the bass note E flat? What have all these happenings to do with E flat? One must try to solve the problem by approaching it from all sides, and the following explanation is quite possible. D—F—D at the beginning—that could be D minor (the key-note could also be B flat, but B flat never occurs). Then in bar 16 there is a second idea which, though not in E flat major, approaches this key; the B flat in the bass (B flat triad!) is in fact there, and stays there for three bars. The whole course of the piece shows quite clearly how, through its entire layout, everything is related to the fundamental note E flat; but this E flat is not introduced as a tonic.

What, then, does this again show us? One's tonal feeling is aroused. This relationship has always been there up to now. It is not easy to talk about all the things we have been through! There we still see the key given: here we see it no longer.

*In this musical material new laws have come into force, which have made it impossible for a piece to be described as in one key or another.* It was so ambiguous. Things have asserted themselves, which made this 'key' simply impossible. We have sensed that the frequent repetition of a note, either directly or in the course of the piece, in some way 'got its own back', that this note 'came through'. It had to be given its due—that was still possible at this stage; but it proved disturbing, for example, if one note occurred a number of times during some run of all twelve. The movement of the individual parts in a polyphonic texture happened chromatically, and no longer in the sense of major or minor. (Schoenberg said, 'The most important thing in composing is a rubber!' It was a matter of constant testing: 'Are these chordal progressions the right ones? Am I putting down what I mean? Is the right form emerging?')

What has happened? I can only relate something from my own experience: About 1911 I wrote the *Bagatelles for String Quartet* (Op. 9), all very short pieces; perhaps the shortest music so far. I had the feeling here that when all twelve notes had gone by, the piece was over. Much later I discovered that all this was part

of a necessary development. In my sketch-book I wrote out the chromatic scale and crossed off individual notes. Why? Because I had convinced myself: this note has been there already. It sounds grotesque, incomprehensible, and it was unbelievably difficult. The inner ear decided quite rightly that the man who wrote out the chromatic scale and crossed off individual notes *was no fool*. (Josef Matthias Hauer, too, went through all this in his own way). In short: a law emerged; until all twelve notes have occurred, none may be repeated. The most important thing is that the single rotation of the twelve notes marked a division within the piece, idea or theme.

My Goethe song, *Gleich und Gleich* (Four Songs Op. 12, No. 4, composed in 1917) begins as follows: G sharp—A—D sharp—G, then a chord, E—C—B flat—D, then F sharp—B—F—C sharp. That makes twelve notes; none of them is repeated. At that time we were not consciously aware of the law, which however had long been felt. One day Schoenberg intuitively discovered the law which underlies twelve-tone composition. An inevitable development of this law was that one gave the succession of twelve notes a *particular order*. . . .

Today we have come to the end of this path—our goal; the twelve notes have come to power, and the practical necessity of the law is completely clear to us. We realize that the development has been continuous. . . .

The law has developed gradually, on its own, but it would have been impossible without using *both* the paths which we have described. And here lay the fulfilment of the urge towards the utmost unity. For the rest, one composes as before, but on the basis of the row. (Here, too, the result can be rubbish, as in tonal composition. Nobody blamed major and minor for it!)

If an untutored ear cannot always follow the course of the series, this does not matter—in tonality, too, unity was as a rule felt only unconsciously. The course of the series can be repeated several times, even quite identically, as in the Sonnet from Schoenberg's *Serenade*. Something of this will stick, even in the most naïve soul. The result will be a multiplication of all the things which were aimed at along the second path—bound up with the urge towards thematicism.

All the works created between the disappearance of tonality and the formulation of the new twelve-note law were short, strikingly short. The longer works written at that time were linked to a text which carried them (Schoenberg's *Erwartung* and *Die Glückliche Hand*, Berg's *Wozzeck*), i.e., really with something extra-musical. With the abandonment of tonality the most important means of building up longer pieces was lost. For tonality was supremely important in producing self-contained forms. It seemed as if the light had been put out! (At least, this is how it strikes us today.) At that time everything was in a state of flux—uncertain, dark; very stimulating and exciting, so that there was no time to notice the loss. Only when Schoenberg gave expression to the law were larger forms again possible.

*How does the series arise?* It is not arbitrary. . . . There are certain formal considerations; for example, to have as many different intervals as possible, or certain correspondences within the series—symmetry, analogy, groupings (for instance, four three times notes or four times three). Our—Schoenberg's, Berg's and my—series mostly arose when an idea occurred to us, linked with an intuitive vision of the entire work; the idea was then subjected to careful thought—just as one can follow the gradual emergence of themes in Beethoven's sketchbooks. If you like—inspiration.

Adherence [to the row] is strict, often burdensome—but it is *salvation*! The dissolution of tonality wasn't our fault—and we did not create the new law ourselves; it forced itself overwhelmingly upon us. The commitment is so powerful that one must consider very carefully before finally entering into it . . . almost as if one took the decision to marry; a difficult moment! Trust your inspiration! There is no alternative.



## NEW MUSIC: BEETHOVEN'S CHORAL FANTASY

*Hans Keller*

'Beethoven was a monster, and like all monsters excites pity as well as horror.'

'We have to accept it [his music] as it is, warts and all. Heaven knows there are plenty of warts. The clumsiness and boorish good humour that appeared in his social relations turn up again in the music.'

J. A. Westrup (*Editorial in Music & Letters*, October, 1960.)

### I. RHAPSODY

'One would think that to-day more than ever', wrote Erwin Stein in 1927<sup>1</sup>, 'composers have turned away from Beethoven. All the endeavours, tendencies, movements and slogans which are said to be typical of our age seem to contradict his spirit as well as his technique. What has the most subjective artist in common with "new factuality" (*neue Sachlichkeit*), his powerful emotion with "serenity", his humour with the grotesque? To him who infinitely extended the expressive range of music, the tendencies towards a *concertante* play with notes would merely have signified a reaction, while "linear polyphony" would have been foreign to his harmonic sense. Not even our notorious slogan "Back to . . ." tends to be completed by his name, nor indeed does "neo-classicism" claim the classical Beethoven as a model'.

Times have changed, 'Back to . . .' has been replaced by 'Forward against', but Beethoven, though easily the most popular of the greatest composers, remains a bone of contention amongst musicians. True, 'Forward against Beethoven!' has never been raised to the status of an official slogan, but when Britten says that the whole rot started with Beethoven, he can't be meaning much else; and when Stravinsky denies Beethoven melodic invention, he discloses a deep-seated misunderstanding of Beethoven's creative aims and their evolution, such as no other great composer has had to suffer. The truth is that Beethoven, whose unceasing development is still almost too intense for us to comprehend, reacted against the

<sup>1</sup>*Das gedankliche Prinzip in Beethoven's Musik und seine Auswirkung bei Schoenberg*, in *Anbruch* (Vienna, March 1927), trans. (by the present writer) as *Musical Thought: Beethoven and Schoenberg* for Erwin Stein's *Orpheus in New Guises*, London, 1953.

early overflow of his melodic invention with an iron creative will to which I know no parallel. This over-abundance of melody can quite easily be demonstrated in many of the earlier works; in fact, it might be suggested that in some of the Op. 18 movements, there are more melodies than the forms can carry.

No, the old paradox is still with us: on the one side, Beethoven's work has become one great folk-song, indeed the only supra-national folk-song in existence, while on the other, professional side, there is this continuing compulsion to debunk the man and his music, on the basis of a grotesquely grudging, 'fair' admission that he was a genius. Since there is a limit to the things which you can find wrong with his established masterpieces, this obsessional hostility has come to concentrate more and more on his personality—and on his so-called 'weak' works. A recent book, psycho-analytic in intention but hardly in effect, has opened the last flood-gate to the waves of passionate resentment (I choose the word carefully) against the romantic picture of Beethoven, and an anti-Beethoven fantasy has firmly replaced the 19th century's hero worship, which had at least this to be said in its favour—that it started out from a piece of artistic realism, namely, the assumption of a musical hero. For that is exactly what he was: quite possibly the most courageous hero in the whole history of art.

If this view is accepted, as indeed it is by the 'public' to whom the music of the anti-Beethovenians so often appeals in vain, their hostility loses its mystery. It is, by now, a psycho-analytic truism to say that punishment awaits him who goes too far. In his search for truth and love, for the point at which these two parallels meet, Beethoven went further than any artist before or after him. And as these parallels converge in his work, as they bend under the overpowering pressure of his sublimated aggression, as his fist rises unperturbedly (as Erwin Stein once said in view of the coda of the Ninth's first movement) 'in spite of everything', he becomes, according to the onlooker's mind, either the demigod for whom mankind has reserved the term 'hero', or one who has assumed far above his station, and who must be punished with all the means at the disposal of impotence.

I have suggested that the man is easier to punish than the music. In fact, the pseudo-objective division between 'man' and 'music' readily lends itself to the rationalization of hostility. The overt premise is always friendly: you can't blame the music for the man. But what invariably happens in the end is that the man is blamed—punished—for the music: he doesn't live up to it. If a man produces something tiny, if his achievement is riddled with imperfections, if, say, he is a politician, we would not dream of separating him and his work, but would consider them as a human whole. As soon, however, as he produces something mighty, the man is robbed of his work and becomes more of an illusion than was the most fanciful deification of the romantic age. Was Beethoven's music not part of his social relations? Can a man who aroused more love and distinctly less hate than a religious leader be examined and evaluated without regard for that which bound him most closely to his fellow men, and by which they were most closely bound

to him? A nasty remark of his is gleefully examined from all sides, real and imaginary; but when he addresses them and embraces them in a piece of music—that is not ‘the man’, that is ‘the music’. I would still understand if they did not get the message, if his love were simply part of his fantasy life. But they get it, they return it, and they have become wiser through it. What this ‘subjective’ composer has to say seems to be so objective that everybody listens to him, whereas the objectivists have to content themselves with immeasurably smaller audiences.

After the hostile division between man and music, needless to say, comes the hostile re-unification, the ‘realistic’ integration. The nasty remarks of the man are projected on to the music. It is an uphill job, of course, this striving for the ‘balanced’ point of view, but nowadays it is not so difficult as it used to be. We have all become critics, a ‘critical attitude’ has become something of a criterion of competence. Everybody has become interested in critical views, with the exception of a tiny group in our midst—the composers themselves. They still stubbornly refuse to write for critics. They are, in fact, more interested in saying something than in not making mistakes. Like everybody who talks to you, they count on your goodwill. But goodwill is not ‘balanced’. It is prejudiced, it takes something for granted. This is the fundamental difference between the critic and the artist: the critic wants to be unprejudiced; the artist wants prejudice. Every artist only addresses himself to those who are biased in his favour. He wishes to be understood, and if he has made himself as clear as possible to those who are willing to understand, he is satisfied. The critics come in after that event.

The ‘critical attitudes’, then, return from ‘the man’ Beethoven to the music, and proceed to crowd round those ‘weak’ works. Actually, weak Beethoven is much stronger than weak Haydn or Mozart, because it is newer and more characteristic. But not all un-established Beethoven is weak anyway, and works like *The Consecration of the House* or the *Choral Fantasy* simply have not yet been understood, because the extreme originality of their forms requires from the listener a maximum of both goodwill and musical talent. Every phrase in the *Choral Fantasy*, every modulation, every sound, bears the mark of the man behind it: in this single respect, I seem to agree with its critics. But whereas they cannot take it seriously, I consider it a revelation, both in view of the finale of the Ninth and by itself. I shall leave the Ninth out of account on this occasion, partly because Tovey<sup>2</sup> has dealt with at least some facets of this relation very sensitively, and partly because I am anxious to throw the autonomous aspect of the work into relief. In part II below, I shall analyze the form of the *Fantasy*, the implication being that if my analysis is truthful, it represents a bill of indictment against all criticisms of the work to date, for none of them shows the least awareness of what I suggest is the structure of the piece, and one is hardly entitled to criticize a structure before one knows what it is. For a start, however, I shall pursue a more descriptive course: if we

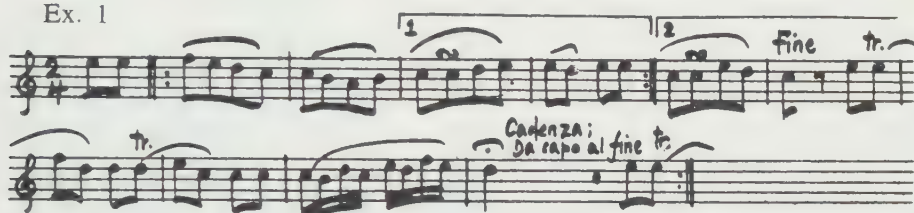
<sup>2</sup>*Choral Fantasia*, Op. 80, in *Essays in Musical Analysis*, vol. ii, pp. 133 ff. (London, 1935.)



try to listen again to a few basic thoughts in the work, we should establish that goodwill without which we do not really form its proper audience.

The theme itself—originally Beethoven's song *Gegenliebe*, into which Christoph Kuffner had to compose a poem on the power of art—is of the kind which Furtwängler used to describe as *Urthema*. It is an attempt at extreme simplicity, elemental in intention, elementary to those who do not understand it. As a test of understanding I would take our reaction to the return of *A* in the *A-B-A* form. In my music example (Example 1) which, in order to save space, I have notated with

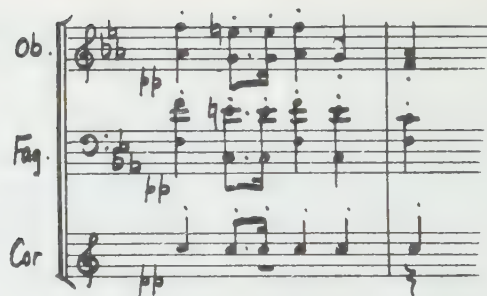
Ex. 1



repeat signs and without harmony, nothing may seem unusual about the return, but it is actually re-harmonized, and on the simple harmonic premises of the *Urthema* the second inversion of F major's dominant seventh on the upbeat ought to produce an additional heart-beat in the listener; if it doesn't, he has not understood. For within the theme's harmonic terms of reference, this turn to the subdominant constitutes a very drastic and emotionally complex event. Technically, a compression takes place; lead-back and recapitulation overlap, producing an extremely modified and condensed recapitulation whose large-scale significance will become obvious in part II. Emotionally, the tension created by the modification and compression is contradicted by the relaxation which any turn to the reposeful subdominant inevitably causes. We are thrilled into a resolution; we relax into tension. A wistful balance is created which, through its wholehearted simplicity, touches the sublime.

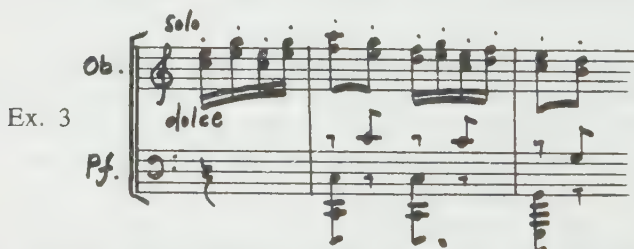
We have to work backwards. The quasi-resolution towards the subdominant presupposes a resolving effect at the stage of the thematic model—at the actual beginning of the tune. This is what the introduction of the *allegro* (not the preceding improvisation) is there for. Tension accumulates through the loose, recitative-like structure and the contrasting dialogue between bass and piano, a tension which mounts when the structure begins to close up, not, as one might expect, by way of the song element in the piano, but through a march phrase (see top of p. 42) derived from the basic bass motif and heard in an entirely new texture. We shall see in part II that this march and its tonality play an important part in the total structure; meanwhile, be it noted that we have moved to the subdominant minor, that the tonic minor struggles for dominance, and that the tune, when it comes, liberates us from the tension by getting us down from the dominant to which the preceding *stretto* has urged us. We now feel and so understand that the recapitulation in the tune compresses in fact much more than we originally thought: what was a larger-

Ex. 2



scale liberation from dominant to tonic becomes a compact one from tonic to sub-dominant. The effect at the final closing-up of the structure, i.e. at the beginning of the tune, is heightened by a three-dimensional circumstance—harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic. Harmonically, we are in the tonic major instead of the tonic minor. In respect of rhythmic structure, the entry of the tune is hastened—composed against the background of a longer initial hesitation, a background defined by the first six bars. Melodically (and, of course, also rhythmically), the crucial motif of Example 2, i.e. the dotted one, is straightened out into a two-quaver upbeat, thus bringing us down to the plane of the *Urthema*, to the meaningfully elementary, if you like: a variation has preceded a model.

The second variation, for two oboes and piano (Example 3), is a unique sound, in both character and texture. The semiquavers derive from the demisemiquaver motif in the opening improvisation, which is now transformed to yield a sublimated



folk-dance character such as neither Beethoven nor anybody else ever attempted before or after. The equally original instrumentation is a main element in this sublimation, the piano's sparse notes assuming the rôle of a disembodied brass accompaniment in an Austrian village band. There is no doubt that the feeling of stable intonation which the piano immediately produces is intended to contribute to the contrast between the implied brassiness and its disembodiment.

By way of renewed contrast, the next variation, for two oboes and bassoon, is written against the background of a highly civilized sound-ideal: 'à la Mozart' would have been the title in a later age, when the definition of backgrounds became verbally explicit (cf., for instance, Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge*).

As distinct from Mozart and rather like Haydn, Beethoven never wrote two similar string quartet textures, and the little string quartet that is the fourth variation

is again without parallel anywhere. It is designed to build up into what, most surprisingly, turns out to bear the character of a coda variation, Beethoven's first rising for the first time in this first tutti of the work. The impression of a coda, of a decisive if mysterious sectional articulation is strengthened by the concerto-like codetta (Example 4) which follows, and which definitely presages something very



different to come. What is happening here? Why a coda effect? Is this not a set of variations? Nobody has asked these questions; nobody has given an answer. In any case, our observations on the basic thoughts of the work must here come to an end. There are no more basic thoughts, and part II will show why not. If, in the interval, the reader could be persuaded to read through the whole score, he will find himself fully equipped to appreciate its form.

## II. ANALYSIS

From time to time, people have stood up for the *Choral Fantasy*, practically by playing it, and theoretically by writing about it. In this country, it was above all Edward J. Dent<sup>3</sup> and Tovey who rallied to the defence of the work, experiencing it as what it is, 'a vision' according to Dent, a 'conspicuously new form' according to Tovey. Yet neither actually comprehended the form at all. Tovey confined himself to a running commentary, and Dent suggested what Tovey implied, that

the main scheme of the work is a theme and variations. The variations fall into two groups, the first instrumental, the second vocal. . . . Between certain variations there are developments on the lines of a concerto; before the voices enter there is a short reference to the rhapsodical dialogue between piano and orchestra at the beginning [of the body of the piece], and the work concludes with a long coda.

Why are there developments 'between certain variations'? Why is the introductory dialogue resumed before the voices enter? Why—and this is a question asked by many people—do the voices enter so late anyway? Dent sees the question from the points of view of pianist and chorus singer respectively: 'What is that absurd chorus shouting about?' on the one hand, and 'What is that absurd pianist doing? Keeping us waiting' on the other. But his defensive answers are poetical, metaphorical, not musical. As counsel for the musical defence, both Dent and Tovey, however valiantly, fail.

<sup>3</sup>*The Choral Fantasia*, in *Music & Letters*, viii/2 (1927), pp. 111ff.



Now, the work does of course comprise a theme and variations. But this is most emphatically not 'the main scheme', nor do the variations 'fall into two groups'. *They fall into three, disclosing a ternary scheme that encompasses exposition, development, and recapitulation.* This is the central point of my essay. It answers every concrete question that has ever been put about the *Fantasy*, and many that haven't.

First of all, let us not make the mistake of vaguely calling the *Fantasy* a combination of sonata and variation form. This kind of combination, whose most outstanding exponents I consider to be Haydn, Beethoven, Bruckner and Mahler, is always based on the true sonata concept, whose main contrast is in the exposition. There are polythematic and monothematic sonata forms, but the basic problem is always the large-scale integration of the expositive contrast, which may be thematic and/or harmonic. (Not even development is an indispensable feature of sonata: the *Figaro* Overture is a sonata form.) In the present work, on the other hand, the main contrast is the middle section, the central group of variations which is composed against the concept of a development section. In this respect, then, the formal scheme of the *Fantasy* is literally unique. Tovey must have divined something of this state of affairs; otherwise he could not have called the form 'conspicuously new'. On the other hand, ironically enough, there simply is nothing new in the form as he proceeds to describe it.

Everything now falls into place. The exposition essentially consists of the solo variations. There are four of them, for flute, oboes, clarinets, and string quartet respectively. The tutti variation heralds the end of the exposition, returning to the original form of the theme, and then developing the codetta (Example 4). The reason why this extended coda section replaces what would be the codetta in a conventional sonata scheme is that it isn't a sonata scheme: the structural articulation must be driven home with all the power at the composer's disposal, for no expositive function has so far been expected: not only a new structure, but a new form is in the making. With the coda variation and codetta, then, we reach the end of the exposition—and the end of part I above.

The transition to the development section follows; its own end is again strongly marked by a piano cadenza, which introduces a drastic change of mood, mode, time, tempo, and instrumentation. The mood is stormy, the key that of the introduction of the *allegro* (tonic minor, see part I above), the time as well as tempo fast, the texture unprecedented: we hear the first variation for piano—or rather, piano and full orchestra. It marks the first stage of the development section, whence it will not surprise us to note that for the time being, sectional variation form ceases. Instead, developmental activity increases by way of gradual modulation, and a typically developmental variation in B major is soon abandoned in favour of development proper which reaches such profundity that it is almost incomprehensible how any ears could have remained perpetually closed to it: perhaps such people suffer a traumatic black-out because the imaginary variation form goes to

pieces. Only a few weeks ago, after the latest performance of the *Fantasy*, it was once again described as consisting of 'a few variations on a pretty little tune'.

The third stage of the development section is reached with what is, thematically, the remotest variation—the *adagio* in A major which, as Dent points out, almost develops into the *Fidelio* quartet ('Mir ist so wunderbar').

But now, when the dotted march motif (see Example 2) is taken up in the same textual manner and the self-same rhythmic structure in which, de-dotted, it had introduced the theme in the exposition (see part I), the feeling of a lead-back can hardly be resisted, despite the wrong key. What we get, and indeed might expect by now, is a proper 'false recapitulation'—the march variation in the sub-dominant, a key doubly predetermined: by the exposition (see part I) on the one hand, and by classical sonata practice on the other. Beethoven was trying—in vain, it seems—to substantiate his development section from all aspects; the risky singularity of his form required the heaviest insurance against misunderstanding, and what better insurance is there than the knowing 'misunderstanding' that forms part of the understanding of a false reprise?

Developmental modulation is resumed in the fifth stage of the section, but when a diminution of the first four notes of the theme (see Example 1) enters and, ostinato fashion, reminds us once more of the repeated opening motif that introduces the theme in the exposition, we know we have entered the lead-back phase. Sure enough, the development section ends as it began, with a piano cadenza, which alternates this time with the orchestral material from the recitative-like opening of the *allegro*. The recapitulation is imminent, and the ensuing progress from C minor to C major is the same as before the beginning of the theme in the exposition. In passing, we remember that even as a piano cadenza has now articulated what we may regard as both the unfolding recapitulation and the last stage of the lead-back, so, in the theme itself, a cadenza occurs before the overlapping lead-back and return (see Example 1, where I have noted the cadenza, though there was no space to write it out in full).

And now we know why 'that absurd pianist is keeping the singers waiting'. *The vocal section is the strongly modified and compressed recapitulation*, whose prototype we have found in the theme itself (see part I). Far from coming 'too late', the voices are felt, after a full experience of the form in which all those mysterious 'developments between certain variations' have turned out to be part of a single gigantic development section, as a return to the beginning on a far higher level, as a consummation which is characteristic of Beethoven's approach to sonata recapitulation.

What we find wrong with new works is often what is rightest and newest. One only has to read Louis Spohr's criticisms of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and turn all negative symbols into positive, and a discriminating appreciation is the result. In the *Fantasy*, the 'belated' entry of the voices in the return of the theme; the way

in which the piano solo of the theme's first appearance and indeed the subsequent solo exposition is now balanced and sublimated by the vocal solo quartet before the explosion of the tutti chorus that corresponds to the coda variation of the exposition; the transformation, thus achieved, of the 'rising fist' into a raised, open hand invoking the commanding power of art—all these new aspects of recapitulation, if 'recapitulation' is still the word, achieve a climax perhaps unprecedented, at this structural stage, in any ternary or sonata-like form. And yet 'recapitulation' still is the word: the economy of formal means is quite shattering, for what we hear, despite all the drastic modifications of texture and long-range structure, is the theme, the whole theme and—up to the coda—nothing but the theme. With a proper understanding of the exposition, the rest of the recapitulation now analyzes itself: all the local extensions, sectional as well as cadential, really conceal one enormous compression from the point of view of the total structure—the compression of the exposition. I find this to be invariably true, that all good extensions are a means of facilitating the understanding of underlying compressions.

For the rest, perhaps it will be clearer now why, at the outset, I suggested that Beethoven's unceasing development was still almost too intense for us to comprehend. One often finds one has to write about his works as if their first performance was impending.

Owing to our long musical past, 'originality' is a conflict-ridden concept nowadays, and unoriginal minds tend to hide behind its devaluation. Can we not find the courage to say that Beethoven was the most original genius amongst the very greatest? Is not that the ultimate reason why he remains a bone of contention, a problem—a contemporary composer?



W.H. AUDEN

# CHORALE

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

(after an old French carol)

Grave

1. 2. 1. 2. 1. 2. 1. 2.

OUR FA - THERS WHOSE CREA - TIVE WILL ASKED

BE - ING FOR US ALL CON - FIRM IT THAT THY PRI - MAL LOVE MAY

BE - ING FOR US ALL CON - FIRM IT THAT THY PRI - MAL LOVE MAY

cresc. cresc. cresc. cresc.

f *sonore* dim.

WEAVE IN US THE FREEDOM OF THE ACTUALLY DE - FI - CIENT ON THE

f *sonore* dim.

WEAVE IN US THE FREEDOM OF THE ACTUALLY DE - FI - CIENT ON THE

f *sonore* dim.

WEAVE IN US THE FREEDOM OF THE ACTUALLY DE - FI - CIENT ON THE

f *sonore* dim.

JUST - LY ACTU — AL

JUST - LY ACTU — AL

pp

*Poco più comodo*

*pp legato*

S.1 THOUGH WRITTEN BY THY CHIL — DREN, THY CHIL — DREN WITH A

S.2 *pp legato* THOUGH WRITTEN BY THY CHIL — DREN WITH A SMUGGLE

A.1 *pp espress.* THOUGH WRITTEN BY THY CHIL — DREN WITH A

A.2 *pp espress.* THOUGH WRITTEN BY THY CHIL — DREN WITH A

T.1 *pp legato* THOUGH WRITTEN BY THY CHIL - DREN WITH

T.2 *pp legato* THOUGH WRIT - TEN BY THY CHILDREN WITH A

B.1 *pp legato* THOUGH WRITTEN BY THY CHIL - DREN WITH

B.2 *pp legato* THOUGH WRIT - TEN BY THY CHILDREN WITH A

S. SMUDGED AND CROO - KED LINE, A CROO - KED LINE ----- THY  
 A. AND CROO - KED LINE, ----- A SMUDGED AND CROOKED LINE  
 T. SMUDGED AND CROOKED LINE THY WORD IS EV - ER  
 B. - A SMUDGED AND CROO - KED LINE THY  
 SMUDGED AND CROO - KED LINE THY WORD IS EV - ER  
 WORD IS EV - ER LEG - I - BLE THY MEAN - ING UN - E - QUI -  
 THY WORD IS EV - ER LE - GI - BLE THY MEANING UN - E -  
 LE - GI - BLE, THY MEAN - ING UN - E - QUI - VO - CAL,  
 - WORD IS EV - ER LEGIBLE - THY MEAN - ING UN - E -  
 LEG - I - BLE, THY MEAN ING UN - E - QUI - VO - CAL



S. *- VO - CAL* *f* *ff* *AND FOR THY GOODNESS EV - EN*  
*- QUI - VO - CAL,* *f* *ff* *AND FOR THY GOODNESS, THY . GOODNESS EV - EN*  
 A. *ff* *AND FOR THY GOODNESS EV - EN SIN IS VA - LID AS*  
 T. *ff* *AND FOR THY GOODNESS EV - EN SIN IS VA - LID AS*  
 B. *- QUI - VO - CAL* *f* *ff* *FOR THY GOODNESS, FOR THY GOOD - NESS EV - EN*  
*dim.* *AND FOR THY GOODNESS SIN IS VA - LID SIN -*  
 S. *SIN IS VA - LID, VA - LID AS A SIGN.*  
*> dim.* *SIN IS VA - LID - - - VA - LID AS A SIGN.*  
 A. *SIGN -*  
 T. *SIGN -*  
 B. *SIN IS VA - LID IS VA - LID AS A SIGN.*  
*dim.* *VA - LID AS A SIGN.*

*Grave*

S. *ppp* IN FLICT THY PROM-ISES WITH EACH OC-CASION OF DIS-TRESS (*sempre ppp*)

A. *ppp* IN FLICT THY PROM-ISES WITH EACH OC-CASION OF DIS-TRESS (*sempre pp*)

T. *ppp* IN FLICT THY PROM-ISES WITH EACH OC-CASION OF DIS-TRESS (*sempre ppp*)

B. *ppp* IN FLICT THY PROM-ISES WITH EACH OC-CASION OF DIS-TRESS (*sempre ppp*)

*cresc.* THAT FROM OUR IN-CO-HERENCE WE MAY LEARN TO PUT OUR TRUST IN THEE *più cresc.*

*cresc.* THAT FROM OUR IN-CO-HERENCE WE MAY LEARN TO PUT OUR TRUST IN THEE *più cresc.*

*cresc.* THAT FROM OUR IN-CO-HERENCE WE MAY LEARN TO PUT OUR TRUST IN THEE *più cresc.*

*cresc.* THAT FROM OUR IN-CO-HERENCE WE MAY LEARN TO PUT OUR TRUST IN THEE *più cresc.*

*ff marc.* AND BRUTAL FACT PER-SUADE US TO AD-VEN-TURE ART AND PEACE *dim.* *rall.* *ppp*

*ff marc.* AND BRUTAL FACT PER-SUADE US TO AD-VEN-TURE ART AND PEACE *dim.* *rall.* *ppp*

*ff marc.* AND BRUTAL FACT PER-SUADE US TO AD-VEN-TURE ART AND PEACE *dim.* *rall.* *ppp*

*ff marc.* AND BRUTAL FACT PER-SUADE US TO AD-VEN-TURE ART AND PEACE *dim.* *rall.* *ppp*

*dim.* *rall.*

## REMINISCENCES OF MAHLER

*Egon Wellesz*

The fate of a composer was never an easy one if he went beyond the boundaries drawn by tradition or (even more dangerous) the prevalent taste. This has been particularly true with Austrian composers since the days of Bruckner and Hugo Wolf. What is to blame for this rather painful situation? I should say that it is those very qualities that make the Viennese audiences among the most sensitive in the world. They are steeped in classical music, and a nostalgic longing for the past makes them ultra-conservative in their musical taste.

In the days of Mahler this attitude of the public was backed by some influential critics. And it was only in his last years that the performance of his symphonies had a triumphant reception. Undoubtedly Mahler the composer was helped by Mahler the conductor. His greatness as a conductor was never questioned by anybody, nor his achievements as Director of the Vienna Opera.

I have often been asked wherein this greatness consisted. I would say: he made the orchestra play a melody with all the intensity it contained, without a touch of sentimentality. One never felt he was trying to interpret a work in a new way.

Last June I had the privilege of talking about the achievements of Mahler as Director of the *Wiener Hofoper*, from the stage of the newly rebuilt Vienna opera. Standing there, I looked up to the famous fourth Gallery where I used to sit as a student, and suddenly that time—more than half a century ago—came back to my mind: the great time of the Vienna opera. Many of the famous conductors of the last generation used to sit there, and those who studied History of Music at the University like myself regularly got tickets on Mahler's instructions. This happened in the last years of his directorship, when the reorganization had been completed.

Gustav Mahler was appointed in 1897. He came to his post at the right moment. The last director had let the reins slip. The music critics and the public demanded a new policy.

Mahler came. Young and energetic, he changed everything. He was the sworn enemy of operatic routine. He dismissed singers and players who were either too old, or not up to his standard, and surrounded himself with a group of young singers,



fanatically devoted to his ideas. They shared his aim of perfection and admired the man who carried them from success to success.

In our days Mahler could not have withstood the storm of indignation which would have been raised by those who felt offended by his ruthlessness in dismissing singers in opposition to his interpretation of a musical phrase, and his suppression of mannerisms dear to them.

But all the young musicians were on his side, and so was the majority of the opera-loving public; and he had a powerful protector in the person of the old Emperor Francis Joseph. After the first year Mahler was received in audience and the Emperor congratulated him for having made himself 'master of the house in such a short time'.

When in later years people came to complain about the director and his dictatorial behaviour, the Emperor would cut off these complaints by saying: 'I cannot understand what you are talking about. Mahler is the director of my Opera. I appointed him. Is there anything else you wish to say?' The Emperor was indeed entitled to speak of Mahler as *his* director. The deficit of the Vienna Opera was always balanced from his personal revenue.

Mahler was the first to perform Mozart's operas as, for example, they are now performed at Glyndebourne. He took a small orchestra and played the recitatives on a harpsichord which was attached to the conductor's desk. Together with Alfred Roller, who did the scenery, he planned the building of the *décors* so that quick changes were possible. I well remember the deep impression which Mahler's performances of Mozart's operas made on Edward Dent. His book on Mozart's operas is the outcome of that experience, and the fact that Dent translated Mozart's operas into English may have been inspired by Mahler's insistence on having the operas performed not in the original Italian, but in the language which would be understood by the public.

Another achievement was the cyclic performance of all Wagner's operas. And what performances these were! For the first time in Vienna Wagner's operas were given without a single cut<sup>1</sup> and with the full orchestra for which they had been written. Next to Bayreuth one looked to Vienna as the place where one could hear perfect performances of Wagner's works.

It was during this period that Mahler is reported to have said: 'I run my head against the wall; but it is the wall that cracks'. It would however be wrong to think of him as a despotic character. He had indeed a great sense of humour, and he liked the people. I cannot find a better way of illustrating this side of Mahler's

<sup>1</sup>The playing time of *Die Meistersinger*, for example, was 3 hours 52 minutes before Mahler came, i.e., approximately four hours; under Mahler the performance lasted nearly five hours, from 7 p.m.—11.50 p.m.

character than by repeating a story which his wife once told me. Mahler had been rehearsing an opera by Hans Pfitzner. It was the first of May, the day on which the Austrian workers used to march along the Ring to the Prater. Pfitzner, a very shy and grumpy man, had to pass them when he went to Mahler's flat and said to Mrs. Mahler: 'I had a frightening experience. Masses of grim-looking workers, an army of enemies!' A few minutes later, Mahler arrived with a happy smile: 'What a wonderful day! Columns of workers! Marching and singing! I felt they were all my friends'.

This is the true character of Mahler, and the spirit which one finds in the march of the first movement of his Third Symphony (pp. 28-40). There is so much uninhibited gaiety in this music. He takes a popular tune—just as Haydn did in his day—and works it out symphonically.

Mahler was fully aware that this kind of music would shock the public and the music critics. In a letter to Bruno Walter he tells him that he has finished the sketch of the Third Symphony: 'I think some of the gentlemen who write reviews will be staggered; those, however, who enjoy a good joke will be pleased with the ramble I take them on. It is well known that I cannot write anything without becoming vulgar. This time, however, these vulgarities go too far. They'll say: one might as well be in a tavern or a stable'.

I think I was the only one among Schoenberg's pupils who admired Mahler from the beginning. I remember that Anton Webern was rather shocked by this march in the Third Symphony when he first saw the score. We had a miniature score and there was a good arrangement of the Symphony for two players. I persuaded Webern to play through the work with me before the first performance, in December 1904, when Mahler conducted the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. It was some time before Webern overcame his prejudice against the realistic features in Mahler's music. Finally, however, he became more and more enthusiastic and later conducted his symphonies.

I had heard all the great conductors of that time, but Mahler's rehearsing and conducting of his symphonies was an experience which I shall never forget. The reading of Mahler's scores by Bruno Walter comes near to it, but he lacks Mahler's intensity and breathtaking power in building up a climax.

Mahler left the Vienna Opera in the spring of 1907 and signed a contract for New York. Shortly before his departure he conducted his Second Symphony in a concert of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, which did not admit any listeners to its rehearsals. I was very keen, however, to be present at the last rehearsals before Mahler left for New York and waited with my fiancée for his arrival. When Mahler came he asked us to wait until he had talked to the orchestra. A few minutes later one of the ushers came and said: 'Director Mahler asks you to come in'. We went into the empty hall. Mahler was already standing at the conductor's desk. He turned round, waited a moment until we were seated, raised the baton, and began.

At the end of the first theme he stopped and asked the violas and cellos to delete the trill on B-natural (p. 7, bar 3), which was now played only in the flutes, oboes and clarinets; the sound became clearer and stronger when played in that way.

Looking at the passionate melody which forms the bridge to the second theme (p. 7, bar 6) one may ask why all the woodwind start *fortissimo*, and instantly make a *decrescendo* to *piano*. In fact this is the best way to get the effect of a *piano* from the beginning, after the two bars in which the brass hammers its rhythm *fortissimo*, the four trumpets even *forte-fortissimo*.

Shortly afterwards there is a great *crescendo* of the whole orchestra. At the climax (p. 12, bar 2) Mahler stopped and said: 'Something was wrong in the woodwind'. At that moment the door of a box opened, and Bruno Walter rushed in and shouted: 'The second oboe played B-flat, not B-natural'. Even Mahler was astonished at Walter's fine ear. And so the rehearsal went on.

The two last movements of the Symphony, the song *Urlicht* and the choral movement *Auferstehn* with the middle section for soprano solo and alto solo, are played without interruption. Before the movement the choir stood up, but Mahler gave them a sign to wait and told the orchestra and the singers what he meant to express when he composed the Symphony. 'It is the wrestling of Jacob with the Angel', he said, 'and Jacob's cry to the Angel: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me"'.

Never before had I seen Mahler in such an elated mood. He never used to explain his ideas to the orchestra and the singers, but would restrict his remarks to points of orchestral technique, dynamics, and so on. When it came to the famous duet between solo soprano and solo alto: 'O Schmerz! Du Alldurchdringer!' it was obvious that the chords in the trombones, though they were to be played *pianissimo*, were covering the voices of the singers. Mahler tried out everything to reduce the dynamics of the passage, but to no avail. The voices did not come through in the low middle register. Though there are no other sustained chords in the score, Mahler suddenly decided to strike out the trombones (p. 197, bar 12, p. 198, bars 2-7) and said in a solemn way, very unusual for him: 'Hail to the conductor who in the future will change my scores according to the acoustics of the concert hall'.

This pronouncement prophetically anticipated the principle of the relativity of perfect orchestration; it justified Mahler's alterations to Beethoven, necessary in a period of such subtle scoring just before we became accustomed to listen to music on gramophone and radio. This new way of listening to music has deprived those who have not heard modern music in the flesh of the opportunity of grasping many of the orchestral effects which neither the gramophone nor wireless can render.

Yet it is most regrettable that none of Mahler's symphonies was recorded while



he was alive. No-one comes nearer to the interpretation of Mahler himself than Bruno Walter. Next to him came Willem Mengelberg, who in 1920 arranged the unforgettable Mahler Festival in Amsterdam with the Concertgebouw. On that occasion Mengelberg devoted one full rehearsal to playing the *Adagietto* of the Fifth Symphony twenty times, without interrupting the strings during the last hour: and he got the effect he wanted: it no longer sounded as if there was a conductor and a group of sixty string players and a harp, it sounded as if one single mysterious instrument was playing. One did not think of the conductor, nor did one think of the players: it was Mahler's music which came over to the audience, freed from all superficialities.

The melody reminds us of one of his songs, *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*—a song which breathes serene happiness; but there is also a phrase taken from his saddest song cycle, the *Kindertotenlieder*. The whole *Adagietto* must be played without any trace of sentimentality. Mengelberg took the movement just as I had heard it under Mahler himself.

Mahler's 'Fate' Symphony is the sixth, the 'Symphony with the hammer' as it is often called. I heard its first performance under Mahler with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, when I was still at the University. The Sixth Symphony is a work of gigantic proportions. All the four movements are kept together by an A-major chord, sounded *ff* in the three trumpets, and turning into a 'bridge' between two sections, as for example in the first movement, where they are introduced shortly before the entry of the second theme (p. 12, bars 3 and 4). The same passage occurs in the development section. Here it is given to the muted horns, and chords for muted violins and celesta move over this kind of chorale and produce strange harmonic frictions (pp. 36 and 37). The last movement with the twice-repeated blows of a hammer on a big drum is of scarcely relaxing tension. I consider it one of the most inspired movements Mahler wrote.<sup>2</sup>

Since most of the movement is heavily scored, Mahler took great pains to work out the delicately scored passages and to get the contrasts between *piano* and *forte* quite clear. There is, however, a *crescendo* of the orchestra in two bars from *pp* to *ff* and back to *forte*, after an extended lightly scored episode which the orchestra never played to Mahler's satisfaction (p. 230, bars 1 and 2). He finally interrupted the orchestra and let the trombones and the tuba alone rehearse the passage over and over again, until they had grasped what Mahler wanted.

Needless to say, today, more than half a century later, orchestras are used to such effects and the general standard of playing has improved very much, but Mahler's scoring is particularly difficult to convert into sound, because every note in his scores is essential.

<sup>2</sup>I should like to draw attention to the study by Erwin Ratz, *Eine Analyse des Finales der VI. Symphonie. Zum Formproblem bei Mahler* in *Die Musikforschung* IX. (1956.)

With the passing of each year the number of musicians who knew Mahler personally, or heard him conducting one of his symphonies, grows fewer. All those who, like myself, lived in Vienna in those glorious days agree that by his presence as a composer, as a conductor, and as a man he changed the musical atmosphere of the city.

He was the first distinguished musician who vigorously supported Schoenberg, and this attitude of his helped us all in our struggle. Nothing can better express what Mahler meant to all of us than Schoenberg's dedication of the *Harmonielehre* to Mahler's memory, in 1911, the year of his death; in it he says 'that Mahler's work, at which so many educated musicians look askance, is worshipped by a man who perhaps also has some knowledge of his craft'.

## AT WORK ON 'KING PRIAM'

*Michael Tippett*

I occasionally lecture to groups of ordinary music lovers. One of the questions most frequently asked is: In opera, what is the relation of the words to the music?

I answer that it is not words as such which the composer is setting, but the situations.

A complementary question is often asked me too: If (as I will have explained) in a long work like my present opera, *King Priam*, I have a master plan in my head before I begin the three years' work of musical composition, what in fact have I got in my head?

I answer: A scheme of relative proportions. Let us look at this second answer first. And you will forgive me if I must talk at first generally, as in a real lecture.

Wagner, for example, had finished the libretto for *The Ring* before he composed the music. The opening words of this libretto are a stage direction: 'The bottom of the Rhine'. When at last Wagner sought for the music to this theatrical situation (of being at the bottom of the great river) he heard as out of a dream the long E flat sounding and had found, if I am right, the key. (I mean the key to the lock of the music.) Because the proportionate length of this E flat and the polyphony built upon it is at once significant of all the hours of music to follow.

I believe Wagner, besides the libretto itself, had already in his imagination the sort of music this 'key' might be and its probable proportionate length, before he heard the E flat.

There is also the question of proportions within; as between one situation and another. In the second act of *Tristan* the situation of the romantic lovers is treated musically at great length. So is the situation following, when King Mark names their love as adultery and betrayal. Yet the actual fighting, when Tristan is wounded, is proportionately exceedingly rapid.

Once again, I am sure Wagner had decided these proportions imaginatively before he began to compose.

This is no way dependent on a composer writing his own libretto. The pattern of proportions in an intricate comic masterpiece like *Falstaff* was all imaginatively known to Verdi before he began.



The libretto, as a scheme of situations, is a kind of bone structure which will be clothed with music as with flesh. This metaphor is most appropriate to operas which are tough and bony—and *King Priam* is certainly such an opera. In hammering out the libretto from the vast material of the homeric epic, I really did pare everything away to the bone. Not to the bones of the *Iliad* of course, but to the bones of the set of situations which alone and exactly fitted my imagined opera. This was a protracted and exacting dissection. For only by a long process of trial and error, and with a great deal of theatrical professional help, could I begin to see what must be rejected and what retained, what accented and what elided.

At the very beginning there was a series of scenic titles, like eight ages of man: Birth, Boyhood, Young Love, Warriors, Women, Judgment, Mercy, Death. In each of these the characters (now one, now the other) are presented with some problem of choice and action, but in the early scenes given little knowledge. Yet the tragedy flows from one such choice, honourably made: Priam and Hecuba at the cradle of Paris. So that this first scene is truly the key to all—exactly crucial. Not birth itself, but what will flow into the world through the child that is born.

Already to state it in this way is to begin assembling the scheme of proportions. For the birth must be presented only as a *donnée*, not described; formalized into music like an agonized prelude. The accent must be thrown on to the living child, speechless, powerless in its cradle. Then on to its nurse, then its mother (Queen), then its father (King). Then on to the wise man who will read the Queen's dream. And then the sudden enforced decision from which all will flow. This is how this crucial sequence reads.

## PRELUDE

Heralds before the curtain. Trumpet fanfares. Echo of trumpets behind the scene. Trumpets and drums in the orchestra. Cries behind the scene. More trumpets and drums and echoes and cries, gaining in urgency, until with a sudden silence:

## SCENE 1

(*The cry of a child. A point of light on a cradle. A nurse comes to quieten the child. Hecuba comes*)

<i>Hecuba</i>	What is it, nurse?
<i>Nurse</i>	The child is restless, and will not be still.
<i>Hecuba</i>	Nor have I the peace of mind to mother him. Where is King Priam?
	( <i>Priam enters</i> )
<i>Priam</i>	You've called me, Hecuba. You are unlike yourself and strangely worried. Is it the child?
<i>Hecuba</i>	O I am restless and unsure. ( <i>The child cries again.</i> ) And now, the baby has caught my mood!

- My dream disturbs me.  
 What has come to Hecuba, the proud and fearless, true wife for you in these troubled times?  
 For I am suddenly afraid.  
 I fear the meaning of my dream.
- Priam* Our wise old man comes now to read it and advise.  
 This mood of fear will pass.  
 Tho' I'm yet young, I've found that once the unknown is known, the way ahead is clear.  
 You will be strong and sure again. You will see.
- Hecuba* Your shining confidence, on which all Troy depends! It's good to hear it spoken.
- Priam (going to look in the cradle)* Even the child responds.  
*(The Old Man enters)*
- Priam* Old man of Troy, you're welcome. The Queen is troubled by her dream. It will not leave her.  
 Is there some hidden meaning there?  
 That is her fear. Fear of the unknown; for I cannot read the messages from dreams.  
 We turn to you.  
 Yours is the cool head where knowledge and advice are stored like honey in the comb.  
 Wise man, unravel the Queen's dream.
- The Old Man (slowly)* The dream means that Paris, this child, will cause as by an inexorable fate his father's death.  
*(The shock is so great that time seems to stand still for a moment)*
- Hecuba (crying out)* Then am I mother no longer to this child.  
 Troy and the city's king are sacred.  
 How could I have been so weak before?  
 Now I am strong again, and I know I shall never fail you further.  
 As Priam's mate I bore already Hector and can swear I shall bear Priam many sons.  
 Harsh though it is, I say, let this child be killed.  
*(A short silence)*
- The Old Man* What says King Priam?  
*Priam* A father and a King.  
*(He turns to the cradle)*  
 So was I once a baby, born without choice. So might I, his father, have been rejected by my parents, to be killed.  
 But then, this child would not have been born.  
 He is born because I lived. Shall he die that I may live?  
 A father and a King.  
 O little child who cannot choose to live or die,  
 I choose for you. *(He turns from the cradle)*  
 The Queen is right. Let the child be killed.
- (He signs for a young guard to take the child. Hecuba and Priam go out as the royal pair. As the guard moves towards the cradle, the child cries again. The guard stoops to pick it up, and goes)*

Clearly the scene is vivid and fast. The words are economical and the thought compact. The articulations of the scene are consequent and simple.

1. The child in the cradle, dependent on, responsive to its parents.
2. Hecuba troubled, Priam certain.
3. The moment that is totally unexpected, unforeseen (the dream-augury) which brings reversal.

4. Hecuba certain ('Now I am mother no longer to this child'), Priam troubled ('A father and a King').
5. The decision which ought to end the story.

In this scene, as befits the scheme of proportions, only Hecuba and Priam are strongly delineated. The Old Man holds the stage for a moment, but the Nurse and the Young Guard are shadowy. Yet by drawing these three characters forward, after the royal exit, it was possible both to make an effective interludial bridge to the next true scene, without lowering the curtain, and to pinpoint still further the accents necessary to the scheme of proportions.

The libretto therefore continues thus:

*(The Old Man and the Nurse come down to the footlights. By some easily manipulated change of dress, or by a mask perhaps, or a gesture, they can become a commenting Chorus. When speaking as Chorus they declaim; when speaking as expressive of their roles they do not declaim)*

### INTERLUDE 1

*Nurse & Old Man (chorus)* Thus shall a story begin.  
A child is born without choice.

*Old Man* From its parents alone it lives.

*Nurse* As now from its parents it dies.

*Young Guard (role)* *(Taking his place beside the others)* That is a crime.

*Nurse (role)* Ah!

*Old Man (role)* What is a crime?

*Young Guard* To kill one's own child is a crime.

*Old Man* It may be a duty.  
Nature has many children for a man.  
Priam is young and lusty, Hecuba healthy.  
What means one child when the choice involves the whole city?

*Young Guard* How can a young man know enough to dare to make such a choice?

*Old Man* After the wise man read the dream Priam knew all.  
Priam made the choice that a king would have to.  
Husband to Hecuba and King of Troy, how other could he act?

*Nurse* There are things left out of your science.  
I had other apprehensions when the dream was read.

*Old Man & Young Guard (chorus)* Time alone will tell.  
We shall judge from the story.

*Young Guard & Nurse (chorus)* For life is a story from birth to death.

*All* Scene will change into scene before you; time rolling with each scene away.  
Thus we follow the story.

*Old Man* And the story of Priam shows that the father-king, who made the bitter choice to destroy a son, was favoured at first in home and land. Hector grew to a fine lad; and now there are other sons. The city calm and flourishing; occasion for hunting and the arts of peace.

Scene II follows instantly.

This sequence of Scene—Interlude—Scene (up to four scenes and three interludes in Act 3) is used throughout the opera. As the music to the first two acts is



already in score, what follows now concerning the music to the words of the scene and interlude which you have just read, is matter of fact, not imagination. Yet the actual music has not differed in any essentials from the imagined music of the period when the sequence of situations and the scheme of proportions were being hammered out.

The Prelude in the libretto is descriptive of itself. I have said it was imagined as formal. The word 'cries' refers not to stage cries, but to musical vocalization. There is more in the instrumental sound than trumpets and drums—wood and brass wind and a piano.

To a surprising extent this kind of sound is a true 'key' to all the music of the opera. The later minute formalized references to the fighting in the Trojan war (already composed) have nothing but men's voices off-stage (two-part homophony), trumpets, drums, percussion, piano. Troy will also go up in flames (not yet composed) to a variant of the Prelude.

But with the first scene proper the deliberate fragmentation of the conventional orchestra begins, and is consistently used throughout, except for one purely instrumental interlude (also not yet written).

This fragmentation was forced on me in order to achieve the greatest differentiation of characters and emotions within a generally declamatory style. (I remark *en passant* that *The Midsummer Marriage* was as consistently lyrical.) Since all is declamation rather than line, there are not arias in the opera so much as monologues—static moments of self-questioning, or the questioning of fate, formally somewhat similar to the monologues in *Hamlet*.

Referring now directly to the libretto of Scene I: the cry of the child is a single oboe. The cradling of the child is reduced to single bass notes of a harp. Priam's strength has two horns between very high and very low piano octaves (giving a four-part polyphony. But more often the orchestral sound is no more than two instruments or even one. Yet the *gestures* are large.) The Old Man has bass clarinet, bassoon, and double bassoon. He is hoarse, and his few words are delivered extremely slowly, one at a time, but *crescendo* until at 'death' it is a shriek.

Up to this point in the score there are no strings used at all. But for Hecuba's decision violins fly off in a single line with immense energy and speed, and Hecuba declaims, riding upon them. The moment she stops, they stop. Priam's anguish has cellos and basses. When he stops they too stop. And this system goes throughout the opera.

The piano is used extensively and in innumerable instrumental ways and combinations. For example, when at the end of the first interlude, the Old Man delivers a short piece of pure narration, the piano accompanies him in a single line of rapid

semiquavers over which he sings his declamation at the speed of speech. Perhaps 'sings' is too *cantabile* a term. The singing is temporarily secondary, the spat-out articulation primary.

I think enough has been said to make clear that everything in *King Priam* is designed to enforce clarity, concision, speed, powerful declamation and even deliberate abruptness of transitions.

It might be interesting now to look at the scene I am in the middle of composing, that of the Women, which begins Act 3. The relations between the three men, Priam and his sons, Hector and Paris, is matched by the relations of their wives, Hecuba, Andromache and Helen.

I think *King Priam* is the first dramatic work on this material which makes use of the fact that the three goddesses to one of whom Paris had to give the apple (Athene, goddess of the city, Hera, goddess of marriage, Aphrodite, goddess of desire) are the prototypes of the women in his life (Hecuba, his mother, Andromache, his sister-in-law, and Helen). So that when he chooses Aphrodite, he chooses Helen. Or, equally valid, by intending to carry off Helen, he is forced to choose Aphrodite. (As he cries out in Act I, 'Is there a choice at all?')

Here is the present libretto to the scene of the Women. It contains a typical monologue, and one of the very few ensembles.

### ACT 3

#### SCENE 1

(*Andromache alone on the stage. A Serving Woman comes. Other Serving Women wait with a cauldron*)

*Serving Woman* Lady Andromache, should we not light the fire?  
*Andromache* Yes. Prince Hector will want his bath the moment he comes from fighting.  
 (The Serving Women go)

Do I deceive myself?  
 There is foreboding in the heart and in the home, as on the day Achilles  
 killed my father and my brothers.  
 Was that not enough, that now today he wants my husband?  
 Husbands are worth more than comrades.  
 Yet Achilles claims my Hector for Patroclus; 'death for death'; in which  
 equation the most brutal wins.  
 Rouse Achilles, he becomes a brute insatiate, out of range of human frailty  
 or human pity.  
 Hector remains to the end but a man.

My love is open,  
 While I mask my fear.

(*Hecuba comes*)

*Hecuba* Daughter Andromache, you must go out now on the walls and plead with  
 Hector to come inside the city, for he is there alone to face Achilles.  
 Deaf to Priam, he will attend to you.  
 Hector must be brought within, for the sake of Troy!

- Andromache (crying out)* For the sake of Troy!  
 O Gods, is there no other sake?  
 What of Hector my husband?  
 What of Hector our son's father? Intolerable!  
 I will not beg my husband from the walls of Troy.  
 My place is here in my home.
- Hecuba* And what will be your home if Troy is taken?  
 When Hector and all our men are dead, you will be given, stubborn as  
 you are, a slave to a Greek.  
 That is the price of pride that will not appeal to Hector in a public street.
- Andromache* Are you not stubborn too?  
 Go now to your husband, to Priam, and beg him deliver Helen to the  
 avenging Greeks.  
 Then Troy—and Hector—will be safe on the instant.
- Hecuba* Daughter, you are a fool.  
 No war like this is fought for a woman.  
 If, because of Helen, the Greeks landed from their thousand ships, it is  
 Troy they want, not Helen.
- (*Helen enters. A moment's silence*)
- Andromache* Did you hear? The war is not for you at all.  
 You are wanted neither here nor there.
- Helen* Your words are meaningless to me, if bitter.  
 My husband Paris wishes me to visit you.  
 He says—
- Andromache* "My husband Paris." Listen to that!  
 Your husband Menelaus. There is where you belong.  
 What of your marriage vows to Menelaus?  
 Did you not feel the sacred ties of home?  
 O but you cannot. A wife is other than a whore.  
 Not love drew you to Paris but lust.  
 Where did he learn his lover's tricks?  
 With other whores before you.
- Hecuba* Control yourself, Andromache. Insults are out of place.
- Andromache* Let me finish! (*to Helen*) Go back to Greece, adulteress, and let this war  
 be stopped.
- Hecuba* It will not stop.  
 Calm yourself and know your duty.
- Helen* Let her rave.  
 I, Helen, am untouched.  
 She cannot know me, what I am.  
 Once, as I came along the walls, the old men spoke of me, for so I heard:  
 "No wonder Greeks and Trojans go to war for such a woman."  
 And they spoke well.  
 For I am Zeus's daughter, conceived when the great wings beat above Leda.  
 Women like you, wives and mothers, cannot know what men may feel  
 with me.  
 You speak of lust and whoring; your words glance off this truth of love  
 whose tempest carried Ganymede into the sky.  
 What can it be that throbs through every nerve, beats in the blood and  
 bone, down through the feet into the earth, then echoed by the stars?  
 Intolerable desire burning ecstasy.  
 All prices paid all honour lost in this bewilderment.  
 Immortal, incommensurable,  
 Love such as this stretches up to heaven, for it reaches down to hell.
- Hecuba* O that my ears should hear impiety so gross!  
 Must Troy become a burning hell to save your vanity?  
 Why was I once so weakened by a dream?  
 Had I but smothered Paris at birth, you would not be here in Troy.



*(Hecuba and Helen stare at one another as they realize the gulf opening between them)*

*Andromache (turning away)* O Hector, our few years of home end in a cruel bitter fate  
unwilled by us.  
O husband take my loving with you to the grave.

*(The 3 women sing together)*

*Hecuba*  
Woman to Goddess,  
I to you Athene,  
Pray for strength  
That heroes may endure  
The city stand.  
And to my man, King  
Priam of towered Troy,  
  
Grant balm of comfort  
From the steadfast mate.  
For death draws near.  
Goddess to me, woman,  
Grant but this.

*Andromache*  
Woman to Goddess,  
I to you, O Hera,  
Pray for wives  
And husbands and the home  
Where children grow.  
And to my man, horse-  
taming Hector with the  
flashing plume,  
Grant balm of comfort  
That his life was pure.  
For death draws near.  
Goddess to me, woman,  
Grant but this.

*Helen*  
Woman to Goddess  
I to Aphrodite,  
Pray for lovers  
And the divine madness  
Of insatiable desire.  
And to my man, beautiful  
Paris envied of all,  
  
Grant balm of comfort  
That he lay with Helen.  
For death draws near.  
Goddess to me, woman,  
Grant but this.

*Andromache* Now you shall both go.  
I have forewarning from within, quicker than the fastest runner running here.  
Hector is dead. Now you shall go.

*Hecuba* O Troy! O Priam! *(Hecuba goes)*

*(Helen and Andromache look proudly at each other before Helen goes. A Serving Woman comes to Andromache)*

*Serving Woman* The bath is hot. Will the Lord Hector come?

*Andromache* Yes. Yes. Yes. *(Andromache goes)*

*(The Serving Women come down stage as a Chorus)*

*Serving Women (chorus)* No. No. No.  
We have it from the runner who has reached the house.

Since this scene is not yet composed, the libretto may yet be changed in small details, though not in shape. At most it will mean the exclusion or addition of single words for the sake of the musical phrase; or the finding before it is too late of better metaphors. But since, as I hold, it is the situations that are set to music, that we respond to, not the words, these minor ameliorations will not greatly matter.

The complementary and preceding scene to the Women, named in the original eight titles: Warriors, occupies all Act 2. It is a short sequence of Scene—Interlude—Scene—Interlude—Scene. There are only wind instruments, percussion, and piano in the orchestral sound, fragmented of course as the orchestra is for the entire opera.

The scene of the Women has, in a complementary fashion, only strings with harp and piano. Andromache has mostly a single line of cellos, and occasional two-part double bass harmonics. Hecuba has her rushing violins. Helen has violas, harp and piano.

I am now (November, 1960) about to begin the music to Helen's monologue. Here is what is written in my note-book:

- |                                |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| a. Let her rave, etc.          | 1. Let her rave<br>2. I, Helen<br>3. She cannot know                    | } 4-part viola chords, with<br>piano octaves                              |
| b. Old Men (Spring)            | 1. Once as . . .<br>2. And they spoke well<br>(twice)<br>3. Leda        | Harp<br>Piano ( <i>Les Noces</i> )<br>Ditto, and whirling violas,<br>high |
| c. Women like you,<br>Ganymede | 1. Wives, mothers<br>2. Ganymede  | whirling violas, high   |
| d. Love itself                 | 1. The Question? What?<br>2. The Answer<br>3. Peroration—Heaven<br>Hell |   |

I have comments elsewhere as to the nature of the voice line. But, except for the unfilled gaps on the right, here is really what this composer has in his head before he finds the music.

The few ensembles in the opera set a curious problem. The ensemble at the end of this scene is typical. Andromache's cellos are *andante* and linear. Hecuba's violins are *allegro* and non-linear. Helen's violas begin chorded, and have harp and piano. The ensemble has to find some viable musical jointure by abstracting the essences of the three different *timbres* and speeds. This is a complex effort of imagination, and I have not yet seen at all what it will be. Yet I do know roughly its length and have at the back of my mind a kind of paradigm of the texture, ready to spring up into consciousness when the moment comes. That is to say, I know that the preparatory cogitation, which goes on now all the time, has already called into being the necessary musical expression, but waiting, as it were, in the wings.

By the time this article is printed the music will probably be in score.

\* \* \*

To satisfy the possible curiosity as to how the story ends I give the following *resumé*.

With the shock of Hector's death Priam comes to Judgment—the only judgment that is final; of oneself. It is a single long monologue of self-interrogation, in the face of his soul and his fate, and of the impenetrable mystery of human life. Driven to the ground, he finds no way out but in acceptance of the true tragic destiny.

The scene called Mercy in the original, but now discarded, titles, is taken from the emotional high point of the *Iliad*, when Priam comes to Achilles by night to

beg back Hector's body for burial. It is Achilles, the vain, brutal hero, who shows mercy to the King who had no mercy for his own child in the cradle.

I would like to quote directly from the libretto, for the final Interlude which follows, because Hermes' comments are valuable for the point of view from which the tragedy has been developed.

### INTERLUDE 3

*(Hermes enters as messenger of death)*

*Hermes (chorus)* I come as messenger of death.  
For the story will soon end.  
A timeless music played in time.

*(To the spectators)*

*(role)* Do not imagine all the secrets of life can be known from a story.  
O but feel the pity and the terror as Priam dies.  
He already breathes an air as from another planet.  
The world where he is going,  
Where he has gone,  
Cannot communicate itself through him,  
(He will speak only to Helen in the end)  
But through the timeless music.

*(Chorus)* O divine music,  
O stream of sound  
In which the states of soul  
Flow, surfacing and drowning,  
While we sit watching from the bank  
The mirrored world within, for  
'Mirror upon mirror mirrored is all the show'.  
O divine music  
Melt our hearts,  
Renew our love.

*(Sudden interruption of Scene 4 as Hermes goes)*

I intend Hermes' song to be cool and lucid, to the accompaniment of flute and harp. But with the final scene the music erupts again into turbulence and speed. Paris, hot from the killing of Achilles in revenge for Hector, demands Priam's blessing. But the father and King has already passed into a world of values in which the parity concerns of vengeance (Hector for Patroclus, Achilles for Hector) are meaningless.

Nor can he be induced to flee the burning city on his son's back to found another Troy. Nor can he communicate further with his wife Hecuba ('I cannot see her'), who lives still only for Troy. Nor has he anything to say to Hector's wife, Andromache ('I cannot see her'), lost in her grief. But as Andromache goes, Helen comes.

The libretto reads:

*(Priam turns to Paris)*

*Priam* I cannot see her. *(He turns back to the altar)*  
*(Paris comes towards Andromache, but she is already going, withdrawn and dignified. She does not look at Helen, when they pass, as Helen comes)*  
*Paris* Helen!  
*Helen* Paris!



*(There is a long embrace. They stand silent together, the beautiful, ill-fated pair. Paris goes to Priam at the altar)*

Paris                It is my wife, and your daughter.  
                         It is Helen.

*(Priam turns to Paris)*

Priam              Go, my son, to find a hero's death in burning Troy.  
                         Let Helen come to me.

*(Paris goes. As Helen comes towards Priam, the trumpets and drums and cries from the Prelude to Act I return, with ever-increasing urgency. Troy is already burning)*

Priam              Mysterious daughter, who are you?

Helen              I am Helen.

Priam              Have I been gentle with you?

Helen              Neither you, nor Hector, ever by word or deed reproached me.

Priam              Why was that, I wonder. Why do I speak gently now, below the screams  
                         of the dying, as the city burns.

Helen              I cannot tell. I am Helen.

Priam              You loved Paris. He is already dead.

Helen              Yes.

Priam              You will go back to Greece.

Helen              Yes.

Priam              For you are Helen.

*(Priam kisses Helen. Helen goes. The trumpets are now exacerbated to the extreme. Priam sinks down before the altar, and tries to say something, but cannot be heard above the din. As his lips continue to move soundlessly, Hermes appears as a God. The din suddenly ceases. In the moment of tranquility Priam can just be heard. He has lifted himself up, but his eyes are closed)*

Priam              I see mirrors  
                         Myriad upon myriad moving  
                         The dark forms  
                         Of creation.

*(Hermes descends to Hades. The din breaks out again as Achilles' son with other Greeks, bursts on to the stage and runs his sword through Priam at the altar, who dies instantly. Complete silence for a moment. Everyone stock still. A few bars of music)*

#### CURTAIN

The few bars of music are already foreshadowed, at least their length and their temper.

## NEWS AND COMMENTS

### GREAT BRITAIN

#### B.B.C. Broadcasts

Readers in America may be interested to know about modern works broadcast by the B.B.C. over the past year. In January they began a series of Thursday Invitation Concerts, given in their studios before an invited audience; and over the past twelve months these concerts have introduced a large number of important modern chamber works to British listeners. The programmes range over many centuries of music, and the aim is to achieve a harmonious blend of old and new. The first year's concerts have included first performances of works by Nono (*Ha Venido*, a short piece for soprano and six female voices), Iain Hamilton (a choral work, *Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day*), and Richard Rodney Bennett (*Calendar*, for chamber ensemble). Other works, many of them receiving their first performances in Great Britain, include Webern's *Six Songs*, Op. 14; Berg's *Chamber Concerto*; Schoenberg's *Serenade* (twice), *Suite*, Op. 29, *Ode to Napoleon*, *String Trio*, *Pierrot Lunaire*, *De Profundis*, and *Three Little Pieces* for chamber orchestra; Boulez's *Le Marteau sans maître*, *2nd Mallarmé Improvisation*, and *Livre pour Quatuor*; Stockhausen's *Zyklus*; Nono's *Polifonica-Monodia-Ritmica*; Berio's *Serenata*; Maderna's *Serenata No. 2*; Henze's *Piano Sonata*, *Kammermusik 1958*, and *The Emperor's Nightingale*; Elliott Carter's *Second String Quartet*; Klaus Huber's *Auf die ruhige Nachtzeit*; Dallapiccola's *Concerto per la notte di Natale* and *Five Sappho Fragments*; Roberto Gerhard's *Wind Quintet* and *Nonet*; Alexander Goehr's *The Deluge*; Elisabeth Lutyens's *O Saisons*, *O Châteaux*; Charles Ives's *Psalm 67*; and motets by Bernard Naylor. Medieval and Renaissance composers represented include Machaut, Dunstable, Okeghem, Clemens non Papa, Tallis, Palestrina, Victoria, Byrd, and John Bull.

Programmes for the first half of 1961 include new works by Lutyens (*Wind Quintet*), Rubbra (*Lauda Sion*), Arnold Cooke (*Wind Quintet*), Elizabeth Maconchy and Phyllis Tate; and first performances in this country of Ingvar Lidholm's *Canto 81*, Berio's *Circles*, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati's *Liaisons*, Boulez's *Third Piano Sonata*, Hindemith's *Motets* for tenor and piano, Miriam Gideon's *Songs from Shakespeare*, and Copland's *Nonet*. Other works to be heard: *Cinq Rechants* by Messiaen; *Choruses*, Op. 27 and *Dreimal Tausend Jahre* by Schoenberg; Stockhausen's *Zeitmasse*; Gerhard's *String Quartet*, Shostakovich's *Octet*, Op. 11; Schütz's *St. John Passion*; Bach's *The Musical Offering*; and Pérotin's *Viderunt Omnes*.

The public orchestral concerts given at the Royal Festival Hall this winter include Schoenberg's *Violin Concerto* and *Four Songs* Op. 22; first performances of *Collages* by Roberto Gerhard and Malcolm Arnold's *Fourth Symphony*, also the British première of Stravinsky's *Movements* as well as his *Perséphone* and *Les Noces*.

#### Edinburgh Festival

An outstanding feature of the 1961 Edinburgh Festival will be a number of concerts commemorating the 10th anniversary of Schoenberg's death. The Festival will open on August 20th with a performance of the *Gurrelieder*, conducted by Stokowski; the soloists will include Gré Brouwenstijn, with the London Symphony Orchestra. The 150th anniversary of Liszt's birth will also be commemorated, and in some concerts his music will be juxtaposed with Schoenberg's. All four Schoenberg quartets are to be played in a series of programmes

also containing classical quartets. Other works provisionally planned are the *Violin Concerto* (Wolfgang Marschner), the *Five Pieces* Op. 16 (London Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis), *Music for a Film Scene* and *Songs* Op. 8 (B.B.C. Scottish Orchestra under Norman Del Mar with Elizabeth Soederstroem as soloist), and the *Wind Quintet* (Concertgebouw Quintet). Works by Liszt include the *First Piano Concerto* (Annie Fischer), *Faust Symphony*, probably the *Totentanz*, symphonic poems, songs, piano music, and his *Am Grabe R. Wagners* for string quartet and harp, written in memory of Wagner. Works by Britten to be performed include: *Sinfonia da Requiem*, *Piano Concerto*, *Serenade*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—the first English opera ever to be given at the Festival. This will be the Covent Garden production, conducted by Georg Solti. Mahler's 2nd and 5th symphonies will be conducted by Klemperer and Kubelik respectively. Other operas are a new production of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, conducted by Solti and produced by Frederick Ashton; *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Joan Sutherland; and the *Barber of Seville* with Teresa Berganza and Boris Christoff, conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini.

#### *News of Composers*

*Francis Burt's* full-length comic opera *Volpone* is to be performed for the first time in England during the 1961 Sadler's Wells season of the New Opera Group (last week in April). Details of the cast are not yet available, but it is hoped that Colin Graham will produce and Leon Lovett will be the conductor. There are to be three performances. The New Opera Group will also present a double bill with Dallapiccola's *The Prisoner* and Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole*. Anthony Besch will produce both operas, and the conductors are expected to be Leon Lovett and Brian Priestman respectively.

*Peter Maxwell Davies* has recently written a work, *O Magnum Mysterium*, consisting of choral pieces interspersed with instrumental sonatas and ending with an organ meditation. He is at present engaged on a string quartet.

*Peter Racine Fricker* is writing a cantata for Peter Pears, with a chamber orchestra of thirteen; it will last about a quarter of an hour and is a setting of the second half of William Saroyan's short story *And Man*. He has also been commissioned by the Cheltenham Festival to write a piano work—this will be a set of fourteen technical studies 'investigating points of piano writing in the manner of Debussy rather than Chopin. They are being written for Lamar Crowson.

*Alexander Goehr* recently completed a cantata for bass solo, chorus and large orchestra commissioned by the Leeds Festival for performance in 1961. The work is called *Sutter's Gold*, and the text is based on a film scenario proposed by Eisenstein for the novel *L'Or* by Blaise Cendrars. It is concerned with a Californian gold rush and an individual's refusal to participate in it.

*Iain Hamilton* has recently finished a *Piano Concerto*, written for Margaret Kitchin, which is to have its first performance at a Glasgow *Musica Viva* concert in the New Year. He is at present working on a piece for baritone and nine instruments: a setting of part of Lucan's poem on civil war, *Pharsalia*. The first performance will be at a B.B.C. Thursday Invitation Concert in April.

*Elisabeth Lutyens* is writing a cantata entitled *Catena*, for soprano, tenor, and twenty-two instrumentalists. One of the projected three parts is so far completed; the texts are all English, by authors of widely differing periods. The work is expected to last about forty minutes. Miss Lutyens has recently completed a *Wind Quintet* (see under B.B.C. Broadcasts) and a work for large orchestra, *Quincunx*, after Sir Thomas Browne.

*Thea Musgrave's* latest works are a *Monologue* for piano, written for Margaret Kitchin, and *Theme and Interludes*—an orchestral piece designed so that it can be played by good



amateur orchestras. She has just completed the incidental music for a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Old Vic, and is now writing a work for flute, oboe and piano for the Mabillon Trio.

*Priaulx Rainier* has written two works in recent months; a *Trio-Suite* for piano, violin and 'cello, commissioned by the South African Broadcasting Company; and a *Concerto-Overture* commissioned by the London Philharmonic Society—this will have its *première* on January 17th under Sir Adrian Boult.

*Alan Rawsthorne* has written an orchestral work, *Six Variations on a Theme by Constant Lambert* (from *Tiresias*), which will be given its first performance in January by the Northern Sinfonia of Newcastle. He has also been commissioned by the Cheltenham Festival to write a chamber work for up to ten instruments, for performance next July.

*William Walton* is engaged on a 20-minute *Gloria* for chorus and orchestra, which he is writing for the Huddersfield Choral Society. The *première* will take place in Autumn 1961.

#### DARTINGTON COURSE IN ELECTRONIC MUSIC

The following note is by John Wilks, who took part.

Bruno Maderna's course in electronic composition was an ambitious though rather tentative venture, probably the first of its kind to take place anywhere (I understand that Ligeti's classes at Darmstadt this year were descriptive rather than creative). It was for many of us the first direct contact with the medium. Originally intended to be a specialized course of practical instruction for composers, it turned out to be of more general interest as a large number of non-specialists learned of its existence and joined in. If similar courses are to be planned, it would be advisable to recognize that, in a study of this nature, any compromise is bound to reduce the seriousness and value of the class. Maderna spoke to us sometimes in English but mostly in French or Italian which was then translated. Although there were moments when direct communication seemed hard to achieve, his extremely lively mind, clear thinking and positive historical approach were stimulating.

The various electronically-produced sounds that can be used in composition were demonstrated; Maderna explained that certain characteristics of these sounds create problems which force the composer to adopt an attitude of mind different from that which he is accustomed to adopt when using instrumental *timbres*. When a number of electronic sounds of different *timbres* are superimposed they lose their distinctive characteristics to a much greater extent than do instrumental ones. Thus the rather obvious first step—to combine lines of varied *timbres*—is not practicable. Maderna and others have therefore been led to start the composition of any particular piece by constructing a 'spectrum' of different *timbres*, each associated with some particular pitch-band. From this 'spectrum' they produce contrasting material. During this process the sounds can be elaborated in various ways (*crescendo*, echoes, etc.). The methods employed were outlined during the course but the equipment used permitted only scanty illustration; while the final stage of composition, during which larger structures are created by manipulation and juxtaposition of the material, was not adequately treated as there was insufficient time.

It was emphasized that a fundamental difference between instrumental and electronic composition lies in the relative incalculability of the latter. Maderna explained that it is not possible to foresee all the subtle changes which electronic sounds undergo when they are combined, and that a 'trial and error' approach is the only possible one; he expressed no

confidence in the use of formulae and figures.<sup>1</sup> In fact, Maderna spoke passionately about possible spontaneous creation of the kind of structures which originally resulted from advanced serial techniques. Naturally the composer concerned would need considerable experience of strict serial work. During the first few days much importance was attached to the necessity of constructing a 'spectrum'; apparently Maderna had taken a month to produce the one from which the material of his *Syntaxis* was derived. Of the tapes we heard, one of the most interesting was his *Invenzione su una Voce*, in which the basic material had not been electronically produced but was some thirty recorded sounds of a woman's voice. After this first stage the process of composition had gone on as in the case of work with electronically-produced sounds. Maderna himself hinted at reservations about the validity of the premise on which the work is based: he seemed now to think that the intrinsic associations of the human voice make it unsuitable as the basic element in a 'spectrum'.

For his listeners, however, the *Invenzione* had considerable qualities; the presence of a human voice, the occasional suggestion of articulate speech, and the imagination and ingenuity of the piece gave it a great range of expression, at times angry and hysterical, at others rich and sensuous.

Mainly from lack of time, it was impossible for every member of the course to carry out practical work, as had been hoped, but we learned much from seeing Maderna produce some material with the rather limited equipment available. Originally the last day was to have been spent building structures of some intricacy from this material, but preparations for a concert of electronic music made this impracticable. Instead, we had a discussion with Maderna which left us a great deal to think about.

#### FRANCE

The *Domaine Musical* concerts are giving first performances this season of works by Bussotti (*Passages*), Arrigo (*Tre occasioni*), Kagel (*Sonant*), and Jansen (*Concerto audiovisuel*). The last-named work makes use of a new colour-organ invented by the sculptor Nicolas Schoeffer, whose works were on exhibition at the I.C.A. earlier this year. The colour organ uses a box-screen containing a sculpture, whose parts can be moved electrically so as to project on to the screen in front different-coloured planes of light. The speed of movement and brightness is variable and the range of colour effects obtainable seems very wide, though when shown to members of the I.C.A. in Paris recently it seemed better suited to producing subtle or dramatic washes of colour than sharply defined planes; isolated patches, dots or geometrical patterns seem impossible to produce at present. The music of *Concerto audiovisuel* will be pre-recorded by the *Domaine Musical* orchestra: the work lasts some thirty-five minutes. There will also be a stage performance of *Pierrot Lunaire*, sung by Helga Pilarczyk and produced by Jean-Louis Barrault.

#### Pierre Boulez

Leo Black has sent the following note:

'This season, most of the major European concert-series devoted to modern music include Boulez's *Pli selon Pli* (*Portrait de Mallarmé*). By next March it will have been played by the

<sup>1</sup>This relative incalculability suggests that the enforced freedom of electronic composition may have hastened the relaxation of extreme serial principles in the recent instrumental music of some composers who have worked in both media.

The matter is, of course, much more complex, and the limited time at our disposal did not allow detailed exploration of Maderna's views. But it struck me as very significant that the electronic medium should free the composer to such an extent from preconceptions about his compositional material. From the outset he is dealing with real sounds, not with symbols which make self-deception all too easy, so he must have a positive reason for any decision he makes. There is room here for charlatanism, but not for its opposite, the 'paper-music' that is so much disliked by critics of recent musical developments; the terms in which a genuine composer speaks are bound, as always, to be clear and unquestionable. I feel, all the same, that too much emphasis was placed on the difference between electronic and instrumental composition; in fact, the 'trial and error' method with tape resembles very closely what goes on in a composer's mind before he puts pen to paper (unless he is indulging in 'paper-music', the indiscriminating production of patterns). The initial imaginative and selective processes seem hardly different from those in instrumental composition.

Südwestfunk orchestra at the *Domaine Musical* concerts in Paris, at Munich's *Musica Viva* and the North German Radio's *Das Neue Werk*, as well as in Basle—in addition to the performances at this year's I.S.C.M. Festival in Cologne and (much better played) at the Kranichstein summer course in Darmstadt. Last summer the first movement, *Don*, was played as a piano solo because the orchestration had not been completed. The second and third movements are the already-heard 1st and 2nd *Mallarmé Improvisations* for soprano and chamber ensemble; the fourth, which lasts eighteen minutes, is a setting of another Mallarmé poem (see below), with a large orchestra; the final movement, *Tombeau*, was originally one of the pieces (another was Stravinsky's *Epitaphium*) written in memory of Prince Max-Egon zu Fürstenberg for the 1959 Donaueschingen weekend, but has since been enlarged. It now lasts 12½ minutes and uses, as vocal climax to a mainly orchestral movement, one line of another Mallarmé poem. The entire work lasts just over an hour.

At this year's Darmstadt course it stood out like a bear with a sore head in a zoo full of the smaller mammals. At a first hearing a number of striking features were apparent; the massed xylophones, harps and electrically-amplified guitar have a vivid, bristling intensity which impresses and alarms even at the end of a half-century during which composers have invented steadily more hysterical sounds. The vocal writing holds the work together; the *tessitura* rises steadily and the final climax at 'La mort' (preceded by a clear, unprecedented motivic imitation between voice and horn!) is exciting—again, an overworked technique is used imaginatively (exploitation of 'impossible' high notes, familiar ever since Kundry first took the stage. Incidentally, a similar, also convincing climax was thought of independently and about the same time by Harrison Birtwistle in a much shorter but comparably monolithic work, *Monody for Corpus Christi*). Again, the interplay of the various formal (which here means sonorous) elements, often against a tense background of sustained chords, gives a degree of musical interest if one approaches the work with the tradition-bound, contradiction-ridden pair of ears one is obliged to use in approaching all other music. The work's time-scale is Brucknerian; at his lectures in Darmstadt this year, Boulez discussed the possibility of static and dynamic elements. He refused to be drawn when asked exactly how long a static section could go on before stasis degenerated into boredom. One suspects that this will be the crucial point in any listener's reaction to *Pli selon Pli*, taken as a whole. The continuous tumult in the second halves of *Improvisation III* and *Tombeau* may be a serious obstacle for those who expect music to go (sooner rather than later) somewhere, and who feel the application of the law of diminishing returns. Crude stuff, perhaps, written against rather than along the grain of music, but despite bewilderment and temporary boredom on the way, one is left with the feeling that a major musical work has been played. Even if the cynical observer wonders why Boulez should react with such uniformly violent terror to all the basic situations ('Le vierge, le vivace et le bel adjourd'hui, va-t'il nous déchirer . . . ?': 'A la nue accablante tu': 'Un peu profond ruisseau calomnié la mort'), he is faced by the undeniable fact of a 62-minute work which on one and a half hearings leaves a strong impression not only of stimulating details but also of overall form'.

## ITALY

*Luciano Berio* gave a lecture tour throughout the U.S.A. last summer, some of the lectures being combined with concerts in which his wife, Cathy Berberian, and Severino Gazzelloni took part. His new work, *Circles*, for voice, harp, and percussion received its first performance at Tanglewood on August 1st, and will be heard in a Thursday Invitation Concert next spring (see under B.B.C. Broadcasts). His latest electronic work, *Momento*, was given its *première* in Hamburg on October 28th.

*Luigi Nono* was recently invited by Radio Italiana to create a piece of electronic music at the Studio di Fonologia in Milan. He tells us he has now completed it 'avec grande enthousiasme, et nouvelles idées à réaliser'. The piece lasts 4½ minutes and is a tribute (*Omaggio*) to Emilio Vedova, the Venetian painter. It was finished in just under a month.



At the moment Nono is working on a piece for soprano, tenor, small choir, and chamber ensemble, *Time of Dartington*, intended for next year's Summer School; and on an opera for the Venice Festival, which will take place not in September but in April (9th-24th). The libretto of the new opera is by Ripellino; the *décor* will be by Vedova.

The Festival will also include concerts by the Melos Ensemble, under Bruno Maderna, a chamber orchestra and Polish choir under Andrzej Markowski, two concerts by the orchestra of Radio Italiana, Rome, and Britten's *Noye's Fludde*.

#### UNITED STATES

Stravinsky has written a new work called *A Sermon, A Narrative and a Prayer*. It is for orchestra and chorus, tenor and alto solos, and narrator. The texts are from St. Paul (*Sermon*), Acts (*Narrative*: this is the Passion of St. Stephen), and an excerpt from Thomas Dekker's *Four Birds of Noah's Ark* (*Prayer*). All the texts are in English. The work, lasting about 15 minutes, was commissioned by Paul Sacher and will have its *première* under him in Basle next year. Stravinsky's next work will be a television story of Noah. A book of his reminiscences of early years in Russia is to be published in the U.S.A. in the spring, under the title *Expositions and Developments*.

Milton Babbitt has recently devoted much of his time to working in the electronic medium (with the RCA synthesizer at the Columbia-Princeton electronic music centre). Two pieces approaching completion are *Studies for Synthesizer*, scheduled for presentation in New York in January, and a work for soprano and synthesized accompaniment; this has been commissioned by the Fromm Foundation and will be performed in New York in September, 1961. He has also completed *Composition for tenor and six instruments*, commissioned by the New York Chamber Soloists; and two smaller works, *Partitions for piano* and *Sounds and Words* for voice and piano.

Elliott Carter is working on a *Double Concerto* for piano, harpsichord and small orchestra. Four Quartets now have the *Second String Quartet* in their repertory and are playing it in the U.S.A. The *Holiday Overture* will be played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and by the New York Philharmonic under Fritz Reiner. It will also be played ten times (on tour) by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra under Skrowaczewski.

In our last issue we printed a translation of Luigi Nono's article and Darmstadt lecture, *Geschichtliche Wirklichkeit in der Musik—heute* (*Historical Reality in Music—today*). Signor Nono has pointed out that this translation was in many places very free, and that some of its elaborations of points made by him could create bad feeling. In particular, the English version over-emphasized his differences with John Cage. We should like to apologize to Signor Nono for this, and also to Mr. Cage.

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## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

**JOSEPH KERMAN:** Critic and Scholar, born in London, 1924. Studied at Princeton University with Oliver Strunk and also worked privately with Alfred Einstein. Music critic of *The Hudson Review* since 1948. His doctoral thesis, *The Elizabethan Madrigal: a comparative study*, was completed in 1950, and is now scheduled for publication by the American Musicological Society. Kerman is at present Associate Professor in the Department of Music, University of California, Berkeley, and he has written articles for most of the leading scholarly journals besides a book, *Opera as Drama*, which brought his talents and ideas before a wider public. He has recently spent six months in England studying the manuscript sources of Elizabethan church music.

**ROBERTO GERHARD:** Born 1896 in Valls, Tarragona. Studied composition with Pedrell and Schoenberg. Has been living in Cambridge since the end of the Spanish civil war. His major works include a comic opera, *The Duenna*, two symphonies, several concertos, and chamber music. For a full catalogue of his works, see *The Score*, September, 1956. During the Spring term, 1960, Gerhard taught composition at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is returning to the U.S.A. next summer to lecture at Tanglewood, where the Boston Symphony Orchestra plans to give the American *première* of his recent work *Collages*, commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation.

**HANS KELLER:** Born 1919. Writings and research fall mainly into four classes: analysis, criticism, criticism of criticism, and psychology, chiefly of musical composition. Is at present preparing a book entitled *Criticism: A Musician's Manifesto* (André Deutsch), and developing his 'Functional Analysis'. Recently wrote his first official composition, commissioned by *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* for Erich Fried's 'play with music', *Izanagi und Izanami*. Is now in charge of Chamber Music and Recitals at the B.B.C.

**EGON WELLESZ:** Scholar and composer. Studied with Schoenberg and Adler. Was professor at Vienna University from 1929 to 1938, since when he has lived at Oxford as a Fellow of Lincoln College. Studied Byzantine and Gregorian chant, and completed publications on these subjects by writing *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (1949, enlarged edition, 1961). Has composed four string quartets, an octet, five symphonies, and several operas — *Scherz*, *List und Rache*, *Die Bacchantinnen*, and *Alkestis* had frequent performances before the war and have been revived recently in Austria and Germany. His latest works are a *Clarinet Quintet*, *Lieder aus Wien*, and a *Suite for piano* which will be performed by the Vienna group of the I.S.C.M. in January. The article in this issue is based on a talk given in the Third Programme last autumn.

**MICHAEL TIPPETT:** Born 1905. Composer and occasional writer. Studied at The Royal College of Music, London. Made his living at first by teaching, then by choral conducting. For ten years was Musical Director of Morley College, but has withdrawn from all major activity except composition since 1950. His compositions include: two symphonies, three quartets, *Concerto* for piano, *Concerto* for double string orchestra, an oratorio, *A Child of our Time*, and *The Midsummer Marriage*. *King Priam*, commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation, will be first performed by the Covent Garden Opera Company in May, 1962, at the Coventry Festival, with John Pritchard conducting and Sam Wanamaker producing.

**BENJAMIN BRITTEN'S** *Chorale* was written for a B.B.C. programme called *Poet's Christmas*, which was broadcast on Christmas Eve, 1944. It was a programme of verse especially written by Cecil Day Lewis, Louis MacNiece, Edith Sitwell, V. Sackville West, Laurie Lee, John Heath-Stubbs, Frances Cornford, Ann Ridler, Henry Reed, and W. H. Auden. Four of the poems were set for unaccompanied chorus by Benjamin Britten (*Chorale* and *The Shepherd's Carol*—both by W. H. Auden), Lennox Berkeley (Francis Cornford's *There was neither grass nor corn*), and Michael Tippett (Edith Sitwell's *The Weeping Babe*). Britten's *Chorale* is published in this issue by permission of the composer and of Boosey & Hawkes Ltd., the poem by permission of Faber & Faber Ltd.

The two examples from Schoenberg's George songs, Op. 15, are quoted by permission of Universal Edition, Alfred A. Kalmus Ltd., London.



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